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TRANSFUSION;

OR,

THE ORPHANS OF UNWALDEN.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN, JUN.

NEW-YORK:

GEO. DEARBORN & CO., PUBLISHERS.

SOLD BY OTIS, BROADERS & CO., BOSTON; DESILVER, THOMAS & CO., PHILADELPHIA; AND COLLINS, KEESE & CO., NEW-YORK.

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WILLIAM C. RIVES
APRIL, 1940

TRANSFUSION;

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THE ORPHANS OF UNWALDEN.

CHAPTER I.

Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door
Insidious Death! Should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the prisoner free.

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

The vale of death! that hushed Cimmerian vale,
Where darkness, brooding o'er unfinish'd fate,
With raven wing incumbent, waits the day,
Dread day! that interdicts all future change!

IBID.

HAVE this scene before you, if a poor description may do it. Though it is but an humble cottage that occupies the foreground and presents the scene of action, Nature around this unassuming abode has been most prodigal. Look far away to both the east and west, and see how mountain after mountain tops its neighbour, and climbs beyond the power of sight, as if these swellings of Old Earth were, indeed, to kiss the sky, but clothed in such mystery as God alone can weave to cloak the meeting from all human eyes. Survey the more gentle South, where first soft plains, parcelled out by ever-running streams; and then bright uplands, giving a green reflection to the westward sun, present themselves. These are the fragrant places, where the denizens of yonder village—sweet Unwalden—waste their easy hours; these are the honied spots where tottering childhood, upright maturity, and wavering old age, meet as one—the common creatures of a mother that has been bountiful to them. Surely this is a scene which claims to be always lovely! Then how much more so now, when the bright sun is getting larger, as he gets lower, in the west; when thin streams of purple, gold, and radiant crimson, stealing his rays, do homage to his parting; when the light air knows no disturbance; when the brisk birds, the lowing flocks, and all the tinier things of the creation speak their joy as Nature best has taught them.

"In the midst of life we are in death." Look into that cottage, which occupies the foreground of all this pleasantness, and see how ill the scene there accords with what is extant without. Tread softly, as you approach the sick-bed, which may scarce be seen, so carefully has some kind hand excluded the severer rays of light. She that lies there, with death touching her cheek, and decay fining the thin veins of her wasted hand, is a mother—and such a mother! Oh, think of the softest moments of care; bring back, if they need it, to your recollections, the tenderest solicitudes that your own mothers have on deep-drawing occasions spent upon you; such

as *they* were, under trials, have emanated from this mother on all occasions, and ever. Trust me, this is a good parent, and needs not the iron hand of death for the closer drawing of those bonds of affection which are now about to be snapped asunder. Give a glance, too, at the gentle form that overhangs the bed where his parent is undergoing this mortal arbitrament with death. It is young Albert, who, as he props her pillow, answers each broken respiration of the sufferer with a tear. Mark how he gazes upon her murmuring lips, as though he would drink in each syllable before it had utterance; and yet it is but pitiful foolery, for he hears her not; nature at his birth killed this communing sense, and although art and practice have taught him to speak, he receives no reply but by signs.

I have said that her lips murmured. Was it that her intellect failed her, or that her sight grew so dim that she could not see that only her poor deaf boy lingered by her side, and that the daughter of her heart was even at such a moment absent. Be it as it may, thus she spoke in scarcely audible sounds.

"Press closer to me, children. Give me thy hand, my Madeline; and sign to Albert to do likewise. Alas! it is all weakness with me, or I myself would have instructed the dear boy. Death is my bedfellow, Madeline: I feel him pressing closer and closer, and I have not command of either soul or body to withstand his approach! Oh, children, now I feel the wrong that I have done ye. But why not your hand, dear Madeline? Now I feel that in affording to myself the selfish enjoyment of shrinking from society, I have scared from you those friendly faces which should have supported you in such an hour. I have looked coldly on those neighbours that would have courted our love and companionship, and now there is not one to pay the last services of humanity—to promise me that, when I am nothing, my children shall still find protectors and friends. Why not yet your hand, Madeline?"

And then, as if rousing herself, to account for this omission, she opened her eyes and gazed around the curtained chamber. Poor soul, in vain! The pang that she received at finding her wanting whom most she looked for, seemed to lend the dying woman strength, for, by a sort of convulsive half-unmanageable effort, she signed to Albert to tell her what had become of Madeline.

"By and by, mother—by and by she will be here," was all the boy's reply, for he dared not tell her how long his sister had been absent or how uncertain her return.

"I want my Madeline," exclaimed the sufferer, in a way that left it almost doubtful whether she had attended to her son's reply; it sounded so like the mere vibration of a mind that had overstretched itself upon the impulse, and was fast returning to its former helplessness.

Albert could not hear the sounds she uttered, but he interpreted them aright, for his own heart taught him the same words; and even as his mother spoke, he whispered unconsciously to himself, "I want my Madeline;" for he was as one unnerved and actionless by the fearfulness of the scene that pressed upon him.

Again the poor sufferer murmured the name of her truant child. The keen eye of Albert (for ever where one sense is wanting, the others gain effect) took from the modulation of her lips the significance of the word. He released his hand from that of his mother, and stole gently—once more, stole gently to the casement, in the hope that the looked-for one might have arrived in sight. His eye rapidly glanced the whole scene;—lovely as it was, to him it was but vacancy, for the form of Madeline occupied no portion of it. Still he would not be satisfied: overlooking the immediate plain, his eye ever rested on the brilliant upland (lighted to a dazzling green by the sun's retiring ray,) for there he knew were his sister's favourite walks.

But no Madeline yet! Presently his eyes were strained, as though they would penetrate the thickly-studded copses that graced the hill-side: he marked the outlet of each winding path that gave egress from the clumps of trees, as though he would catch the coming shadow of her he sought. But still no Madeline!

What could this mean? Was she ill? Was she astray? Had feet been untrue, and cliffs and torrents wide and fierce?—All was one vast sea of confusion and distraction, and Albert still had to gaze—hoping, doubting, despairing in succession, rapid as thought only can accomplish.

It was true that, when Madeline had quitted the "Single Cottage" at noon, there was nothing in the appearance of her mother that denoted speedy dissolution. She had been ailing for days and even weeks, but had ever forbidden any notice of her condition to be carried to the neighbouring village. Madeline had pressed it upon her that very morning; but the answer was, "No, dear girl, I feel better to-day, and by to-morrow shall again be able to take my walks with you." The smile of satisfaction with which this was said deceived Madeline, and she herself went abroad with a lighter heart than she had experienced for some days before.

But in the afternoon a painful change took place. Albert was reading by his mother's bed-side, consoling himself with the thought that she was in the comfort of a soft sleep, when a suppressed but hurried movement of the bed-clothes aroused him from his study. As he turned to look at his mother, he half-thought that he saw a head withdraw from the exterior of the window; but the action, if one, was so sudden, and his mind was so immediately called to other considerations, that it remained upon his impression little more than something fanciful and ideal. He looked at his mother, and agony had possession of every feature of her face: presently moan succeeded moan, and the body of the patient writhed as if to be free from some monstrous oppression that was paramount upon it. Before Albert recovered presence of mind to determine what course to pursue, there was something like a recovery of her senses, and she signed to him for water. To be brief—the actual fit was over, but it had left fearful tokens of its power; and the mother from that moment felt that she was in the hands of death. Had her strength permitted, there would presently have been a melancholy scene to have marked the absence of Madeline; but she had for the most part remained quiet, probably in the hope of gathering one last residue of strength to enable her to take a long farewell of her children. Yet still as she reclined upon her bed of pain, nature would break out, and she would call upon their names almost involuntarily. These were Albert's trying times renewed: as often as he saw her lips move, he would flit to the window to look for the absent girl, and then as suddenly return to the bedside to take glimpses of the dear pale form, whose cheek he had so often kissed; whose neck he had so often entwined in childish playfulness within his arms, and whose signs of instruction he had so often bowed before and reverenced.

But the last asking for Madeline had been too painfully distinct;—it had been followed up:—it had had its steps and its grades:—it had evinced a train of thought which Albert for some time had feared would arrive, and yet which he knew not how to meet. The poor boy was almost maddened by mingled terror and grief—for, as he stood gazing at the window, hope died away in sickly pangs, and his heart sunk within him—No Madeline was to be seen.

At length he stole back again to his mother's side. All was quiet and uninterrupted: she looked as if a gentle sleep had again overtaken her. It was the event for which Albert had wished, and on the instant he glided from the cottage, and might be seen tracing the plain with rapid steps towards the upland, on which he had so long gazed from the window. But,

however swift his motions, they still gave evidence of the irresolution of his thoughts. Indeed, he scarce himself could have told what was his purpose: —it was impulse, rather than motive, that was thus dashing him along; and the only formed idea that he possessed was the necessity of Madeline's re-appearance to speak words of balm to her mother. For this he sped the plain—for this he was hurrying to the upland; and though, had some strong hand suddenly seized him and detained his course, he would have struggled fearfully and from his soul to be released, he had hardly built to himself a hope to urge him to the effort which he was making. His was the act of doing something towards alleviation, with nothing but an undefined vagueness to carry it to the end.

The little plain which he had to traverse to reach the upland, finished with a streamlet, fresh and sparkling as the remainder of the scene; and across this had been constructed by the villagers a rustic bridge, barely wide enough for two to pass abreast, but protecting the heedless passenger in his crossing by means of a hand-rail on either side. Albert, on his arrival here, found the bridge occupied by a stranger of venerable but not very ancient appearance—though even thus much the stripling would scarcely have perceived but for after circumstances, for, on his reaching the bridge, he looked but once—saw it was not Madeline, and would have passed. The stranger, however, who seemed to have been gazing on the glittering sheet that fled beneath, either from idleness, or in that absence of mind which is attendant upon deep thought, suddenly looked up, on hearing the boy's footsteps sound upon the wooden planking of the bridge, and, regardless of the evident hurry of the new comer, placed himself so that the bridge was impassable.

"Gently, gently, my young friend," said the stranger, as he perceived that Albert was going to use very little ceremony in effecting a passage— "Gently, gently—spare a moment, if it is only that I may gaze on features with which, methinks, I might almost claim acquaintanceship, though I cannot—— Come, boy, let me have the privilege of age, and ask your name."

Albert, with no time to explain that he was unable to hear the observations of the stranger, shook his head impatiently, in token of all parley being in vain, and again would have pushed by.

The stranger was somewhat offended at the motion, which he naturally enough interpreted to signify the youth's refusal to satisfy his curiosity; but, recovering himself in a moment, he cried, "Well, well, perhaps I had no right to demand! But at all events, with all courtesy, I may, as a stranger, ask if you can direct me to the 'Single Cottage,' which I understand to be in the immediate neighbourhood of Unwalden?"

Albert's patience was exhausted; and this time, not even deigning a shake of the head, he thrust the querist on one side, and rushed on for the upland with redoubled speed, while the stranger gazed at him on his eager course with a mixed sensation of wonder and resentment.

Albert was unaware of the rudeness of which he was guilty. His mother's dying form was before his eyes, and the necessity of finding his sister—of leading her to their parent's side to comfort her—to hear her last injunctions—overcame every other feeling: he saw, he thought of none else; and probably all that he knew about the interruption that he had just undergone was, that a something had impeded his path, and that he had circumvented it in the best way he might. Having conquered this difficulty, he surmounted the rising ground, threaded the thick copses that graced its sides, and was still at his speed where the upland gradually increased into a hill. With panting haste the youth clambered up the precipitous sides, and at length reached the top. Then how his neck stretched forward—how his eyes strained, as he stood on the very summit, and

turned his gaze around to have the whole space it commanded within his gaze! Still on Madeline!—It could not be! he would not believe it. He had climbed the hill for her:—as he rose, his hopes rose with him, and there she was to be. Again and again he looked from side to side, and presently made the place resound with her name—"Madeline! Madeline!"

"Still no Madeline," thought he, but with a strange revulsion in the tenor of his thoughts. "I must have passed her in the deep copse. She must have threaded the Gipsy Brake, while I sped round by the Fairy Circle. She must have gone a circuit by the mountain. She must have been loitering in the village. For home, then—for home!"

These, and the like thoughts, were the work of a moment, and the next saw him again at his speed retracing the hill, the copse, the upland, the bridge, the plain.

But the cottage threshold he could not for his soul pass at the same speed. There was a flitting thought that made him pause ere he lifted the latch; and with a sigh, such only as comes from the heart of hearts, he crept on to the door of the sick room.

He opened the door, and there was one kneeling at the bed of his mother. Madeline then was come! No,—it was a man; and as the kneeler raised his head to see who entered, Albert recognised the stranger, who a quarter of an hour before had arrested his progress on the bridge. Under other circumstances, or at a more distant date, the youth probably would not have remembered him; but the time elapsed was so short, and so strangely had he twice looked to see a well-known form in that of the unknown visiter, that the recognition was instant and unavoidable.

The dying woman had also heard the door open. "Madeline! Albert!" cried she; and the latter was at her bedside. He saw her lips move, and it was no difficult matter for him to guess the import of what she said. He crept closer and closer to her pillow, and by his own lingering kiss taught her to repay him in the like.

Then there was a pause; and to have looked upon the three was to have believed that a triad of death had been accomplished; so motionless each limb—so solemn the silence—so mute the interval.

The last rally came; the dying woman somewhat raised herself, as if strength again was hers. "Henry," said she, "dear Henry, as I may now say," looking at the stranger with eyes where affection was contending for mastery with the growing thickness, "you have well arrived, and I feel grateful that I have been able to exchange some few words with you. To your care I bequeath my orphans: when you look on them, remember me, and—forget their father. It is all that I require to secure your unfailing affection to them. And—and—is it said?—Yet a little!—For a last office, give to Madeline, and in my name, as dear a blessing as I now give to you and this poor bereaved boy."

Another pause:—the sufferer sunk from her strength—her lips moved as if to repeat the farewell: her hands, as they rested on the bed, motioned as though in benison to Albert, and as he might best understand it—her eyes closed. A shadow rested on her face, and death took possession of that mortal tenement which was once among the loveliest that the earth ever knew.

CHAPTER II.

Whilst I remember
Her and her virtues, I cannot forget
My blemishes in them, and so still think of
The wrong I did myself.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

Since every man who lives is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind what happens let us bear,
Nor joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.

DRYDEN, PALAMON AND ARCITE.

YES, she was dead! And oh, how entirely was that truth felt by the two who knelt beside her bed, and had watched the last sigh of her lips—the last tremor of her hands, and the last palpitation of her heart! But to have looked at them would have been to think that they yet waited for another word, or for some still coming token of returning life. They watched by the bedside as if immovably intent on a hope that did not yet fail them. Yet their countenances belied such hope. In the stranger's face was all the solemn severity of a tempered but deep-felt grief; while in Albert's the passion was more openly and undisguisedly displayed. But even in his the proper reign of sorrow was not yet established;—he had shed no tear—he had burst forth into no vehemence of exclamation, and, instead of the relaxations of open-hearted grief, every lineament of his countenance was fixed, as though charged with one deep ungovernable feeling; and, as he gazed upon the form that had once been a woman, he himself might have been taken for something inanimate, but for the thick breath that he drew through his nostrils, whither it was forced to seek a passage by the strict compression of his lips.

How long these two would have thus remained it would be difficult to tell; but suddenly a visiter broke in upon them, which, on the instant, aroused them from the horrid dream of their first grief. The latch of the cottage was heard to open, and a woman's voice, that at other times would have struck upon the ear, soft and musical as the summer bird's carol, trolled a few lines of a well-known fairy song:

Let us flit as bright as spring;
Let us nought but pleasures bring;
Let us teach the world to be
Happy, blithe, and gay as we!

As the last line was given, the chamber-door was thrown open, and Albert on the instant recognised the form of his sister. It seemed as though the boy had waited for this signal for his tears to flow, for, on the moment, like a long pent stream, they gushed forth from his eyes, and, as he threw himself around his sister's neck, the circumstances of the day forced from him, "Oh, cruel, cruel Madeline!"

The girl's sudden entry from the full light of a brilliant sunset prevented her for the instant from seeing beyond the boy who thus greeted her; and

with an impetuosity of disposition for which she had always been remarkable, and which had ever been dreaded by her mother, she shook Albert from her with an angry exclamation at the presumption of a younger brother thus arraigning her conduct. The few words that had passed, however, was sufficient to explain to the stranger who the new-comer was; and rising from the bedside, he approached her, and would have led her from the room.

"Madeline," said he, "the word was ill said; but come with me, my child, and let me explain."

A second rebuke, and from the lips of a person whom she had never seen before, was not calculated to check her turbulent spirits. "And you, too, sir?" said she;—"what now, I pray?"

"For shame, girl, for shame," said the old man, in a hasty manner; "look on this, and let it teach you to soften your tone to the sorrow of the occasion."

As he spoke, the stranger drew back the curtain of the window, and the dying light of the sun struck directly on the pallid form that occupied the bed. It told the whole at once; and with a suddenness too great for Madeline to sustain, she sank senseless at the feet of her monitor.

But we have already dwelt too long in the abode of death. Let us now pass over a few days with a rapid glance. The grief of the bereft orphans took its full vent; and the only consolation that the senior, who by this time had announced himself, and was received as their mother's brother, could afford, was to join in their lamentations. To say that the sorrow of Madeline was greater than that of Albert would be wrong, but nevertheless it appeared to be of a more harassing and distressing nature. She seemed to be continually reproaching herself with her ill-timed absence at the close of her mother's existence. It was in vain that her uncle assured her of her mother's tender recollection of her, even in the very agonies of death: it was in vain that he dwelt upon the tenderness of her tone, or depicted the affection of her countenance, when she transmitted to the poor girl her last and dearest blessing. Madeline would listen to his words in mournful silence, save when she burst forth into fresh and more copious exclamations of grief, or fruitlessly murmured to herself, "Why not to me—why not to myself?" At other times she would make Albert point out the very spot on his burning cheek where his mother's lips had last rested, and then fasten her own in the place, as if she would imbibe the spirit that had preceded her. Albert's grief was more open and undefiled with self reproach; with his pain, even when keenest, was mixed a soft and tender melancholy resting on the recollection of his mother's calmness and undisturbed serenity, even in her most distressing moments. To temper the acuteness of his own feelings he had ever before his mind the picture of her placidity; and before many days had elapsed he could dwell with tranquillity—almost with comfort—on the memory of her manner: the kindness, too, with which she had looked upon this new-found uncle was a sort of balm to his wound, and he would sit and gaze at the stranger with a proportionate share of pleasure.

At length the day for the funeral of their mother arrived. As on that of her death, the sun shone brightly, and the fields looked gay. When the procession issued from the cottage, and gained the open air, Madeline started, as if the broad glare of day was intruded in mockery of her sorrow, and she felt as if she could have welcomed the bursting of her heart, when she remembered that the last time the sun had shone upon her was on the day when she so heedlessly—or, as she herself would have termed it, so guiltily—absented herself from the cottage.

When this sensation had abated, there was a strange medley of feelings in her heart. She felt—she knew that this last act of consignment to the earth was the completion of all separation from her mother; while the

corpse—only the poor corpse, lifeless, senseless, soulless, had remained in the cottage, the chain, though stretched to the uttermost, was not yet entirely broken; there was yet a link of union remaining, and though it was the dreadful one which only binds the living to the dead—still it was a link; and, as the drowning wretch will catch at a feather or a leaf that floats upon the billow, so Madeline would steal to the coffined remains of her mother, and, leaning over them, still fancy that she had not entirely lost her. But now even this hold was to be plucked away: custom claimed its prey, and the last demand of death was to be satisfied. With these feelings, the slowness of the procession was as the race-horse's speed to her; every yard of ground passed over, seemed to confirm the dreaded separation; and, as much too soon as the law's lame progress is for the spendthrift debtor, was the arrival at the spot where earth yawned for her accustomed allowance. But here crept in the incongruity of the poor girl's sensations. The ceremony, too, rapid as it urged the inevitable separation, was all too slow, as it held her every faculty in aching suspense. Each step that she took onward gave a new feature to the one same scene in her sorrowing fancy: first, she would behold her death-striken parent searching arouud the room for the daughter, who should have been there to sustain her uneasy head—then the well-known voice, pronouncing "Madeline! my own dear Madeline!" would vibrate in her ear; and anon a sad portraiture of her mother's grief-tempered anger at her absence would creep upon her; and though perhaps the moment before she had whispered to herself, "Oh! that this nearness to all that is left of her might endure for ever," she would at these thoughts exclaim, "An end—speedy, and at any price—to such pains as these."

The ceremony was concluded, and the mourners returned. On their way they were joined by a young man whose countenance well entitled him to the privilege of enlisting himself in their sorrowing party. Long did he walk by the side of Madeline ere she noticed him. Silence was on the four; and as they paced along, it might have been imagined by the uninitiated passenger that they were some group stepped forth from the sculpture of ancient times, tipt with only so much of the Promethean fire as gave them power of motion. So pale and solemn was their show—so stealthy and unimpressive their retreat from death's abode, that, could Holbein but have seen them, eagerly would he have seized upon their model to give a crowning spirit to his "Dance of Death."

At length Madeline looked up, and saw by whom she was attended. The sight shook her as though something had thrilled her to the very core. "Wahrend," she said, "away! In all earnestness of heart, I pray you—go! I give you no blame, I attach to you no fault, but between us lies more than half the wretchedness I feel. That I have lost my mother is Heaven's good will; but that I lost her without sharing her dying blessing with poor Albert, (oh! how much poorer I!) is either your reproach or mine! Be it mine! I will not argue otherwise; but even so, I cannot forget that it was with you I wasted the precious hours which should have been spent at her bedside—with you, in idle talk, I lingered, when I should have been listening to solemn things. Leave me then, Wahrend; for never again can I look upon you without remembering that our that day's walk, however innocently conceived, has robbed me of what ought to have been the most precious moments of my life."

Wahrend would have remonstrated; but the vehemence with which Madeline gave utterance to these words, added to the recollection of the freshness of her affliction, taught him that it was wiser to reserve himself for a less agitated opportunity. He withdrew—and again silence overcame the three, till each was buried in the solitude of their respective apartments in the cottage.

CHAPTER III.

Tell me then the reason why
Love from hearts in love doth fly?
Why the bird will build a nest
Where he ne'er intends to rest?

LORD ROCHESTER.

IT was not till nearly a month after the mournful day with which the last chapter concluded, that Wahrend ventured to present himself at the Single Cottage. Time had been at work, and ministered its never-failing comforts. The sorrows of Madeline had softened down into melancholy recollections, and those violent and overwhelming paroxysms of grief that had shaken her to the very soul had given place to a sobered sadness—a tempered sorrow, which cast a mellowed and thoughtful sentiment over her fine countenance, and subdued that "wondrous fire of eye," and vivacious tone of expression, which was her wont in her days of heart's ease and carelessness.

But the sight of Wahrend re-awakened all her sad story. His entry into the cottage operated on her spirit as though he were her evil genius, only come to rekindle pain and misery. But even with this the visiter could perceive that there was not that energy of refusal when she bade him go, that had characterised her speech on the day of the funeral. It was a negative decided and absolute, but tempered with a womanly show of modesty. Her ears were not now shut, as then, to the sound of his voice; and though her command for his absence still remained the same, he was afforded an opportunity to plead his own cause, and describe his participation in all her sorrows. But on one point he was still unsuccessful: in vain he used all his village store of eloquence to persuade her to permit another visit—in vain he intreated for a second opportunity to speak of his grief for having unintentionally been an instrument in that piteous absence which was still the chief of Madeline's sorrow: the girl's answer was, "No, Wahrend, no! I can never meet you without its remembrance reviving in my breast, and withering all hope of pleasure in your society."

Wahrend took the wise course. He forbore pressing his suit more closely on that occasion, and resolved to apply to the maiden's new-found relation as a mediator.

"The task you would impose upon me," said the old man, after having listened to Wahrend's request, "is a difficult one, for it is manifest that Madeline feels most acutely on the subject. I have the more difficulty, too, from not knowing how far you were the tempter on the day in question."

"My good sir," replied Wahrend, "there was no matter of temptation on either side. It was merely the hand of chance that brought Madeline and myself together on that day. I had been out with my fishing-rod seeking sport in the brooks on the plain below, till the sun became too high and hot to give me further hope of success—just at that moment Madeline appeared; she was full of buoyancy and spirits at the apparent change for the better in her mother's health; and, as we had not met for several days, it was almost unconsciously, while engaged in our various subjects of conversation, that we pursued our course from home so far that it was impossible to get back sooner than we did. Believe me, sir, there was blame on neither side."

"I can hardly allow that, my young friend," said the uncle; "for, at least, Madeline should have felt that no improvement so soon after such an illness could have justified her quitting her mother for so many hours."

Here Wahrend zealously undertook to defend Madeline altogether from the imputation.

"Gently, gently, good Master Wahrend," cried the elder; "it is not quite high treason of which I have accused her, so there is no need of so able an advocate, even though he be fee'd with the hope of a lady's smile. A little indiscretion and want of calculation is the sum of what has happened; or, rather, I would say, if I have yet read Madeline's character rightly, it was an impetuosity of temperament, which so involved her in the affair of the moment as to leave her no judgment for the consideration of the future."

Wahrend looked grave at this speech. Was it that he did not like the observations that fell from the monitor; or, that his heart silently confessed to him that the uncle had already dived into the real depths of Madeline's character?

"Come, come," continued the stranger, "there is no occasion for such seriousness of demeanour. Before the day is past I will endeavour to take an opportunity to make Madeline view the case in the true light; and if you will be here betimes to-morrow, I take upon myself to venture an assurance that you shall be received as was the wont before the occurrence of the melancholy event, which for the last month has clouded all our brows, and leaded all our hearts."

On this assurance, and happy at having won so powerful a pleader to his cause, Wahrend took his leave.

The old man had his reasons for the promise he had so freely given. After what had passed on the day of the funeral, he had not suffered a whole month to elapse without making inquiries respecting the young man who had been a party to Madeline's lamented absence on the day of her mother's decease. Albert had been interrogated in writing, and inquiries had also been made in the village. Every thing that he had heard had tended to give him a respect for Wahrend's character; and though Madeline as yet had not completed her seventeenth year, he looked forward to the probability that a period would arrive when a marriage between these two might take place. To this conclusion he was led by a very natural train of reasoning. From the short conversation he had had with Wahrend, it was plain that his sentiments towards Madeline were of the most affectionate order; and though he had not yet had an opportunity of sounding Madeline on the subject, he could not doubt that the fact of her having chosen this youth as her companion ought to be a strong inference of a feeling on her part towards him, such as might ripen into affection and regard. His inquiries had also afforded him information respecting Wahrend's property, which, for a Swiss denizen, he found to be ample and unincumbered, and such as would afford to any moderate disposition all the means of worldly comfort; joined to which, his family was one of the most respected in the canton in which he resided.

Satisfied on these points, the uncle promised; and he performed his promise. That same evening he took an occasion to remonstrate with Madeline on the subject. Young as their connexion was, and respectfully as she regarded her mother's brother, the hot spirit of her temper would peep out. It seemed as though she could not brook the idea of other persons thinking for her. She might have said with Shakspeare's Richard, though on another ground—"I am myself alone!" It was as though her judgment was supreme and complete in all its parts—a panoply wherein she stood entire; and that to aim a dart against it was treason self-confessed. She however yielded to her uncle's representations, and consented to admit

Wahrend to his former station. As to what that station was, nothing was said :—it was not for a young maiden to speak on such a subject, and the senior trusted to his penetration to be able to discover it from the opportunities that would be afforded when the pair were together.

And now we must let in Time with his swooping wings : the *edax rerum* must arise to the imagination, and quickly devour a year of all the lives of those that have yet made their appearance, or are to make their appearance, on the tablet of these events. Autumn, winter, and spring must pass on more swiftly than Banquo's ghostly line on witches' mirror, and summer in all her loveliness again spread her bounties around Unwalden and the Single Cottage.

By this time the new-found uncle had had ample opportunities for studying Madeline's disposition towards her young attendant; but this study had afforded him no satisfaction. He did not see in her behaviour any of those germs which promised in lapse of time to shoot forth goodly blossoms of affection. There was too much of indifference in her manner towards Wahrend—there was too broad a carelessness in her address of him to give hopes of future regard. Nor was this all : there was a fast and loose in her mode of dealing with him that was most distasteful to her elder friend : it was evident that she was unwilling that Wahrend should know when or where he was to depend upon her : it was as though she would only do such things, and pursue such a course, as could not be quoted against her ; so that if ever he turned to reproach, there was to be no text found whereon he might build his lecture.

These observations afforded exquisite pain to her uncle. He saw in them unhappiness for Wahrend, unhappiness for Madeline, and unhappiness for all that were connected with either of those parties : but as her conduct was such as to avoid affording the complaints of Wahrend a cornerstone, so the elder could not see whereon he was himself exactly to found remonstrance. But this was not the worst. In examining one part of Madeline's character, he could not avoid studying another : this was that impetuosity of disposition of which two instances have already been mentioned. Indeed, this very feature was combined with, and formed part of, her coquetry towards Wahrend ; for no otherwise could the rapidity with which she turned from rough to smooth—from kind to cruel—be accounted for.

The uncle, willing to give the case its full interpretation, next turned his attention to the mode in which she treated her brother. He was willing to learn from that, what was her sentiment towards Wahrend ; for that she should love Albert with deep affection was natural, and that there should be no occasion to conceal that love is consanguinity's command and happiness. This examination confirmed the senior as to her indifference towards Wahrend. Her whole mind seemed fraught with affection towards her brother : if he only walked across the room, her eye chased him uneasily ; she was ever ready to watch and care for his smallest desires ; and her hours seemed never so happily spent as when she was endeavouring by explanations and tuition to make up the deficiency which nature had imposed upon him. But still, amid all this, the tinge of authority prevailed : it was not the sister with her brother, so much as the mother with her child : the difference in their years, though not great, and Albert's natural affliction, were to be admitted as some apology ; but the spirit of her movements, doubtless, betokened the same feeling as that which was exercised on Wahrend—subdued indeed in tone, but essentially identical.

Her uncle felt deeply the mischief of this growing evil. He searched the subject with all his knowledge of the world, and traced that love of power was the hot-bed from which this noxious herbage had its growth. He felt that each day was precious—that each hour the thing was suffered

to slip by unnoticed was confirming the strength of the disease, and making it hopelessly irradicable.

Why, then, did he not struggle against its growth?—I pray you understand this man of sorrows aright: yet another chapter, and you shall know his history; but, meanwhile, let it be observed that he was a being broken down with affliction;—kindly of heart, but disappointed of hope, his best energies had long since been withered, and he was little more than an animal vegetating on the earth, deprived of that potent mastery of soul which gives the human creature all his more valuable properties. Thus, then, though he had wit to discover Madeline's error, he was too infirm of purpose, or rather too bent from inward bruising, to venture on a task to which his sense of duty was ever impelling him. Often and often did he resolve that Madeline should be recalled from the error of her steps: frequently did he exclaim to himself, "Before another day passes, will I point out to this headstrong girl the mischief to which she gives herself up." But days, weeks, and months passed by without the attempt. He was too unnerved, too coward to be able to force himself to face the impetuosity of her character, and to decry the fearless vivacity, or worse, with which she yielded to every movement of her mind.

All these things that had been estimated by the uncle, Wahrend had also observed, but he lacked the microcosmical glass by which the former had been able rightly to interpret the meaning that lay beneath the surface:—he probably had heard of allowances to be made for maiden modesty, and might think that Madeline acted on grounds which Cressida confesses—

> Who shall be true to us,
> When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
> But though I loved you well, I woo'd you not;
> And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man;
> Or that we women had men's privilege,
> Of speaking first.

But practically he brought to the examination of the mysterious methods of the sex nothing but a villager's simplicity and a Swiss straight-forwardness of honesty. The properties were altogether useless: he might as well have tried to read Hebrew by the aid of Ainsworth, or rightly understand the world's revolving system by the book of Tycho Brahe. It was a mystery! That was all that could be said for it. But who is he so wise of self to know that mysteries are better let alone, and that their very essence is to be inexplicable? Not Wahrend surely!—He would interpret. The interpretation in good truth was wrong; but nevertheless 'twas a good interpretation; she acted upon it.

To this, then, it led him. Madeline had not yet understood him aright; perhaps he had not been sufficiently clear in explaining his intentions, and her bashful modesty stood in the way of giving too much encouragement till he had been explicit. Oh, it was admirably thought, and he hugged himself in the plenitude of his wisdom.

Further consideration taught him that it were better to proceed, if possible, upon assurance; and he resolved to seek a private interview with the uncle of his mistress, to state to him at once his desire of making Madeline his own, and to solicit his powerful aid and assistance as an advocate in behalf of his cause.

This application and offer on the part of Wahrend were like a thunderstroke to the old man. He saw at once that the moment of trial was come, and that his hitherto deferred duty could no longer be put off. For an instant he hesitated whether he would at once explain to Wahrend that his hopes were vain, and so endeavour to induce him to withdraw his preten-

sions altogether. His honesty of heart, however, combined with his feeling of nervous indecision, would not permit such a step. It might be possible that he had interpreted Madeline's sentiments a-wrong: —it might be that at the bottom of all her coquetry and surface-spread indifference there was a stratum of affection; and he resolved to make the trial. But he took care not to commit himself with Wahrend. All that he would engage for was to speak to Madeline on the subject, and to give a fair statement of the young man's proposals.

That same evening he roused all his latent energies to the task.

"Madeline," said he, after having summoned her to the little room that went by the name of his study; "my dear Madeline, I have for some months been anxious to speak to you—I may say to remonstrate with you, on your conduct towards Wahrend."

"Towards Wahrend!" cried she, colouring at the suddenness of the attack, and ill-digesting the term "remonstrate."

"Be not angry at my interference, dear girl," said her uncle, "it is your own welfare and happiness that are in my heart, and that prompt me to tread on such tender ground. I have long looked with pain at what has been taking place between you:—I have long been resolving to speak to you on the subject. But if you feel unprepared, let us defer it till to-morrow, that you may have time to search your own feelings."

"Oh, no, sir," replied the girl; "pray, not. On the subject of Wahrend, as on all other indifferent subjects, I am ready without preparation."

"Be not rash in words," said the uncle, "for much depends on this night's resolve. Wahrend is an excellent young man—perhaps I never met with one who had so little to blame in him; but even if he were one of faults, it would justify no unfair treatment."

"Unfair treatment, uncle! I know of neither fairness nor unfairness on the subject. If he seeks me, he seeks me with my humours; and if one, he must take the two together."

"Madeline———"

"Allow me for one moment," continued she, somewhat eagerly;—"his visits are not of my seeking; his pretentions—if, as you insinuate, he has any—are not of my raising. He comes here, I presume, not as my visiter, but as the visiter of the family: as such he can of course expect nothing from me but my usual manner. Sorry shall I be if those manners are offensive to any one; but even so, the mischief recoils on myself, and on me be the burthen."

"Madeline, Madeline, I expected this. But am *I* to have no weight in the business?"

"If," said she, "you speak as my uncle—every weight; but if you come as the advocate of Wahrend, how can I treat you other than I would treat the gentleman himself?"

"For shame, for shame, Madeline," replied her uncle; "you must well understand my motive. What can it be but your happiness? And if Wahrend forms part of our consideration, it is because you have encouraged him to pursue his hopes."

"I encouraged him, uncle! Was it I that recalled him after his former dismissal?—Has it been I that have given him invitations day after day to the cottage? Tax your own memory, and you will soon discover whence the encouragement has proceeded."

"So young," cried the uncle, "and already so in love with sophistry! If I interfered to have Wahrend recalled, on what principle could it have been but for your sake? I did not even know him then. And if the invitations to him have verbally emanated from me, was it not in your power to stop them in a minute by the slightest intimation?"

"Well, sir, be the fault where it will, I have nothing to recall—nothing to wish undone. I defy Wahrend to specify one single act on my part that

marks my reception of his pretensions;—and if the young man will be mad-o'-love, Narcissus-like, making me his mirror, and therein admiring himself without an ay or a no left to me, the affair must rest with him, for I discard it. And so, uncle, good even!"

"Stay, Madeline; we must not part so. Have I your consent to dismiss Wahrend?"

"Neither consent nor refusal. I say again, I discard the whole business. Wahrend may come, or he may send his spaniel in his place, if he please. They are both pretty fellows, and I don't know but that I like Fidel the best of the two."

"Niece, this is beyond endurance. Methinks if an honest Swiss, like Wahrend, must be ill used, at least some respect is due to my age, my experience, and the character which I bear. Steps, Madeline, must be taken to insure reason a fair hearing, if you have not wisdom enough of your own to accept it when offered."

"Uncle!—sir!"—cried Madeline, her face springing to the depth of colour with passion at the shadow of a threat; "be assured that let what steps be taken you please, I am, and ever will be, my own free agent. I know no bond but that of inclination and all else must be fruitless of management. I would rather fly to earth's confines than submit—ay, rather than hear the words that convey the thought of it."

"Madeline—"

"Be quiet, sir, I say. It is for me to be heard, or never shall we understand each other. For your protection I thank you—for your advice I am grateful—but commands, threats, and the favour of another cause contrary to mine must ever make me lament the day that first brought my mother's brother to Unwalden. I pray you, sir, ponder on this, and let it pass for earnest; for it is as fixed in my mind as the unalterable fiats of eternity. I can know a counsellor and a friend, good uncle; but no master."

With these words she left the room.

The old man was seen no more that night. Albert, when their little supper was spread, would have tapped at his uncle's door to summon him to the meal, but Madeline with frowning signs forbade. Passion, with all its tortuous chain of argument, was still alive in her bosom, and would not let her see that she had done more than vindicate her just rights, and establish on an equitable basis the relative position between her uncle and herself.

But when she retired to rest, and was buried in the seclusion of her own room, other thoughts recurred to her in spite of herself. She could not forget the ever-living anxiety which her uncle had displayed for the interest of herself, and of her brother, which perhaps she estimated still more highly. She could not omit recalling to her memory the blandness of his manner, the mildness of his demeanour on all occasions, and the fond readiness with which he gave in to any project that was set on foot for the happiness or hilarity of his darlings. All these things entered her heart like many-edged swords, and ever as they passed through her conscience made gashes as they went. Then too she thought of the constant show of sadness that sat upon his countenance, and the hints that he had dropped of the misery of his forgone life; and could she, whom he had so tenderly cherished, be the cruel one to inflict fresh injury on his galled heart? The thought haunted her all night, as they say the ghost of the murdered victim stalks in darksome hour before the ruffian whose bloody hand performed the deed. Continually did she cry, "I will go and seek pardon where I have offended:" and as often feelings of shame and wrong-minded timidity held her back.

Thus for the night, for not till the sun first shot his early ray above the horizon did sleep relieve her from her present grief.

CHAPTER IV.

I am a wretch of honest race:
My parents not obscure, nor high in titles were:
They left me heir to no disgrace.
My father was (a thing now rare)
Loyal and brave, my mother chaste and fair:
The pledge of marriage-vows was only I;
Alone I lived, their much-loved fondled boy:
They gave me generous education; high
They strove to raise my mind; and with it grew their joy.
Thus my first years in happiness I pass'd,
Nor any bitter cup did taste;
But, oh! a deadly portion came at last.

OTWAY'S COMPLAINT OF THE MUSE.

ON the next morning, Madeline was awakened by a kiss from Albert. She eyed the boy, and perceived there was something amiss by his manner. By the usual method she inquired, and learned that their uncle, though it was nearly two hours past his usual time for rising, had not yet made his appearance. Madeline herself had over-slept the time, but that was to be accounted for by the lateness of the hour at which sleep overtook her.

She hastily dressed herself at the intimation she had received from Albert, for her heart told her that something was wrong. As soon as she was ready, she went to her uncle's room. He was not there:—the bed had not been slept in, and the apartment was in disorder.

What could this mean? Of what strange tragedy had her violence been the author? She longed to know the worst, that anticipation with its thousand horrid phantoms might be stifled by the truth—and yet she dreaded the arrival of the moment that should explain the mystery.

It came. A peasant arrived from the next village to the south, which was about eight miles off, and he brought with him a letter. All that he could tell was, that an elderly and reverend looking gentleman on horseback had given it to him, and paid him his own price for bringing it to the Single Cottage.

Madeline took the letter with a trembling hand. She partly guessed its contents, yet still wanted resolution to break the seal. Albert, innocent, and eager to know of what stuff this mystery was made, urged her to a speedy execution.

The missive was opened, and its contents ran thus:—

"My Children—for I must ever call you so; though, when you receive this, you will understand that I have withdrawn myself from you—that I have for ever quitted Unwalden—and that search or pursuit after me will be equally in vain. It may be possible for you to find me, but never for you successfully to follow me, for your approach will ever be the signal for me to fly from realm to realm.

"I may be wrong in my resolve—even as I write my heart half-confesses to me that I am so; but I seem to be hurried on by an irresistible impulse in saying—Farewell for ever!

"Will you not condemn me for the step I am taking? Will you not, if mischiefs overtake you, cry out upon the uncle (and yet no uncle) who, in your early days, forsook you, and bade you fight your own way through the thoroughfare of life? Alas, I fear me—yes, and justly.

"But, even if it be so, my resolution is yet unaltered; and I confess myself too great a coward to dare the risk of encountering such scenes as passed between us yesterday.

"But I ramble from my purpose, which is to give you a fair and faithful history of the things that have been, in the hope that you will see the principle on which I seek to avoid the things that may be. Nor do I offer you the narrative on this account only. While your mother, or subsequently myself, was at hand to guide and instruct you, there was no pressing necessity to acquaint you with the circumstances of your earlier life, or the events that led to those circumstances. The case is now altered:—even at this moment you stand alone; and I should be guilty of an injustice were I, knowing this your situation, to forbear giving you all the information within my power.

"Let me, in opening my story, begin by informing you that your mother and myself had not the ties of blood to unite us. Anon you will hear how much more nearly and dearly we ought to have been connected. We were both of us natives of the same village in England; and, from the connexion which existed between our families, may almost have been said to have been intimates from our first entrance into the world. I shall not, however, carry you so far back. Suffice it to say, each succeeding day found us together: as children, we might be seen hand in hand rambling through my father's grounds; and, when further advanced towards adolescence, we were still to be found together in our studies, our amusements, and our thoughts. No objection to this frequency of intercourse was entertained on the part of our friends; for, as we alike were only children of the families we represented, the parents of both looked fondly forward to the day that should see their friendship united by marriage as well as by affection.

"For ourselves, marriage was an idea that never distinctly entered our imagination. It was a word that I had never uttered to Agnes, simply because it had never had possession of my thoughts. The constant recurrence of our interviews had so far assimilated our tastes, that the idea of departure came upon us with the same fearful image as that of death; but beyond companionship we had never thought. To be together was our paradise, beyond which we neither looked nor cared; and our casual separation was the signal for the exertion of all our simple cunning and ingenuity to abridge and circumvent. It was this that had caused our mutual education at home; for even now I can remember, with all the freshness of to-day, the passionate flood of tears that burst from Agnes when my father announced his intention of sending me to a public school to pursue my education. The girl sorrowed like the young kid that has lost its dam; and the week that was to have intervened between the notice of my departure and the act itself was sufficient to steal colour from her cheeks to such an extent, that her alarmed parents petitioned—and successfully—that the plan might be altered for that of a home education.

"A day of separation, however, at length arrived, most unexpectedly. My father, who was a retired merchant in the West India connexion, received a letter one morning by the post, announcing the arrival in London of his West Indian agent from Jamaica, where my father still retained a large estate, and from which he derived his principal income. He had long wished for an opportunity of a personal communication with this gentleman, as it was generally understood throughout the country that West Indian property was greatly depreciating, so as to render it advisable for those who had large property at stake there to be on the alert. At the time of the arrival of this letter, however, my father was suffering so much from an attack of the gout that it was impossible to go himself to town; and the agent, in his letter, announced that he had only time to stay three days in

London, previous to his departure for the Continent, where he had business of the greatest importance to transact. Under these circumstances my father came to the resolution of despatching me to London.

"Against such a commission as this it was impossible for either Agnes or myself to struggle; but the necessity of the errand could not take away from the bitterness of the separation, and a flood of tears marked my departure.

"On my arrival in London I found my father's agent had been so much curtailed, even in the short stay that he had purposed to make, that he had already quitted the metropolis. In his place I found his son, a young man apparently about five-and-twenty years of age, who, having received full instructions from his father on the subject, together with himself having had the advantage of living the greater part of his life near my father's West Indian estates, was fully competent to answer all the quesons it most concerned our family to ask.

"It is not my intention to dwell on the character of Stephen Warner; neither may I do it, my children, for this man was no other than your father. The day, too, for invective and anger has long since gone by. I write but to tell the facts that occurred: it is for you to draw the conclusions.

"When I first introduced myself to Warner, I thought it impossible not to be captivated with his style and manner. As a companion I found him replete with information, and a fund of never-ending gaiety and description. Under his guidance I was speedily initiated into all the mysteries of London; under his tuition, with shame do I say it, I shortly became acquainted with its follies and dissipations. I neither palliate nor excuse my conduct; but I tell it that you may both be warned how easy it is for a young and ductile mind to be led away by the first glare of the splendours that await its first visit to the more luxurious haunts of men.

"This course was pursued for a fortnight, during the latter part of which period we were waiting in expectation of the elder Warner's return from Paris. At the expiration of that time a letter arrived to state that he was still unavoidably detained in the French capital, and that he must not be expected in England for a month, when he would be able to come down to the village where my father resided.

"On this information being communicated to my father, I received a recall to the country. In courtesy I could not do less than invite Warner to accompany me: but with me it was a matter of more than courtesy; I felt as if I could never have enough of his conversation, and pressed him with proportionate warmth to spend the month in question at my father's house. The invitation was accepted, and next day we arrived at Morfield.

"Warner had frequently heard me extol my Agnes, as I then so fondly called her, with all the enthusiasm of a young heart deeply involved in a single feeling, of which she was the Alpha and the Omega, and had as frequently laughed at the overflowing of my soul in praise of her many excellencies. He was now introduced to her. 'I cry you mercy,' I well remember his saying to me after the first interview—'I cry you mercy! This was indeed a topic worth dwelling on. I could myself be a six-hour poet on so admirable a subject!'

"Fool that I was, I felt proud of having won so good a judge to my side, and spent myself in devices to exhibit the more hidden excellencies of Agnes to his gaze.

"I had not been back at my native village many days, before I found the mischief of the spirit in which I had entered into the dissipations of London. Every thing in the country seemed so dull and so monotonous—even the conversation of Warner seemed to flag for the want of those gay accompaniments that had helped to make it living. My only delight was

to recount to Agnes the scenes I had witnessed in London, and these descriptions in their turn only served to confirm my disease, and I pined once again to behold the gay metropolis—to launch into its amusements, and to taste its pleasures. My situation might be called a sort of parody on the well-known couplet of the poet:—

> A little learning is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

The short admission I had had into the gaities of London had not satisfied. Had I always been ignorant of them, in my ignorance I should have been contented; but having once had my feet wetted by the spring-tide of luxury, I longed to dash into the depths and the rapids, and to be hurried along the torrent.

"This sentiment soon grew too large for my own single bosom, and I communicated it to Warner. I could not have made a more happy disclocure for him; for already had he felt the force of Agnes' charms—already had he sworn to supplant me, and make her his own. His active mind was brooding a plan for removing me from the scene of action, when I thus furnished him with one entirely fitted to his purpose.

"My proposal was simple enough: it was to ask my father's leave for a renewed absence, and to get Warner to undertake the task of soothing Agnes' sorrow at my own seeking of a separation for awhile. This, however, did not suit the foresightedness of my confidant; his plan required something more than a mere week or two of friendly separation; and he, therefore, urged me to take my departure clandestinely, on the ground that he was sure from what my father had heard in hints from others, and from my own mouth, in shape of anecdote, he would be opposed to any second visit to London. For awhile I withstood this unauthorised absence; but the man of the world was too much for the simple villager, and, on his promise to soften anger and soothe displeasure, I made my escape from the village on horseback one morning before any of the family were stirring.

"From that hour Warner was triumphant.——The grey light of dawn is breaking in upon me as I write; and in what I have further to say I must be brief. Neither is it necessary that I should delineate in full all the false and cruel artifices by which he worked his plot to its crowning mischief. Falsehoods unnumbered—insinuated calumnies against my character—forged letters which kept me at a distance, and him in the stronghold, wrought the consummation of his project:—Agnes, in despair of heart at my supposed neglect and infidelity, gave her hand to my treacherous companion.

"Nor was this all. As if to make the devastation of my happiness complete, my father, who had long been suffering more and more severely from the complaint which had forced me to take that first accursed visit to London, sunk under the disorder, united with the grief he felt at my unexplained absence. An old servant, who had tended me when a babe, and watched each growing year of my life, sought me out with unwearied determination. He found me; and the double news of your mother's marriage and my father's death, burst upon me at once, even as one storm hurls the two dread attributes of Heaven on the unprotected wayfarer that is exposed to the fury of the smiting clouds.

"Those who have not undergone the same blow cannot have imagination for the pang inflicted. Grief, rage, despair, and revenge heaped their accumulated tortures on my soul, and I gave vent to curses, imprecations, and prayers in one and the same moment.

"The servant who discovered me was alarmed at my energy of passion, and, dreading its consequences, despatched a letter to Morfield, with an

account of the paroxysm under which I was labouring. But it had not yet reached its height. The more I dwelt on the infernal arts of which Warner had made use to inveigle my sweet Agnes from her first affections, the more my heart—my whole soul—swelled with inextinguishable fury. They tell of the old martyrs of the church having live coals thrust into the sockets of their eyes, but with me the burning embers had penetrated to the very brain, and I felt as if the fortitude of a thousand men would have been unequal to sustain the anguish which I endured. Warner's form was ever before my imagination—it even excluded the remembrance of my lost Agnes and my deceased father, and it appeared as if there was to be but one act consummated to complete the drama—Revenge!—Revenge!

"The intenseness with which this single thought took possession of my soul was too much for the strength of my intellect, and the result was a violent attack of the brain fever. The malady held its dominion over me for several weeks, during which time it remained doubtful with the physicians whether I should ever recover further than to be consigned to a madhouse for the rest of my life. At length I was pronounced to be convalescent, and, after a lapse of more than two months from the first arrival of the news, I was permitted to quit my room.

"The first step that I took when I found myself sufficiently master of my actions, was to make inquiry respecting Agnes. The only intelligence that I could gain was, that Warner, with his wife, had taken his departure from Morfield within a day or two after his hearing of the threats in which I had indulged against him. He was no coward, physically speaking; but he had that within him which made him shrink from the presence of his victim. Whither he had gone no one was able to pronounce—not even his wife's parents, whom, on my arrival at Morfield shortly after, I found complaining bitterly of the unkind treatment they were receiving at the hands of their son-in-law.

"This information well nigh caused a relapse in the delicate state of health to which I was reduced. All the sober reasonings that had been preached to me by my physicians—and which, indeed, I had begun to preach to myself—of the necessity that there was for my restraining my passions, disappeared at the thought that Warner was behaving with unkindness to Agnes. Could he, indeed, be so all-in-all a monster? And yet, as her parents well observed, if he was not placing her under restraint, well persuaded were they that their girl would never have suffered so long a period to elapse, without, at least, letting them know to what part of the world her husband had conveyed her. The constant prevalence of this thought in my mind set me upon the task of finding out her hiding-place. By dint of exertions I traced their route to Dover and Calais, and with no other guide but this, I wildly resolved to search the Continent for the spot whither they had removed. I cannot now look back at the hopeless prosecution of this scheme, without confessing to myself that there was a taint of madness in the thought. Then, however, I thought otherwise, and accusing myself of being the means of entailing on Agnes the wretchedness which I supposed her to be undergoing, I felt as if my heart dictated me to offer myself as the peace-offering, in the hope that the most unrelaxing exertion would be the means of discovering her retreat.

"With this sentiment in my mind I set forth on my travels, and for six tedious years scrupulously applied myself to the task that I had imposed upon myself. But in vain. Aye, in vain did I search city and village; in vain did I expose myself to the rigour of a Russian winter, or to the sweltering ray of a Sicilian sun: every effort was fruitless and nugatory; and after having searched every portion of the Continent, not only by myself, but through well-instructed agents, I returned to England and to Morfield, after an absence of more than six years—a man of sorrow and stricken with grief.

"On my arrival at my native village, I found the parents of Agnes had long since died, without even hearing one word from their daughter; and that her father, who survived his lady but a few months, had willed the whole of his property to public charities.

"For myself, I had nothing further to do, or to hope. The remembrance of Agnes still clung to my heart—somewhat more soberly, but still most anxiously. Each house, each field, each garden of Morfield, assisted the recollection, and I resolved to sit me down there for life, with the memory of past times for my companion, and the thousand cherished mementos of Agnes for my society.

"It was thus that two more years passed away—and thus, doubtless, my days would ever have been spent—but for a most unexpected incident. I was sitting one day in my study, trying to tempt myself to read, while thoughts of what had been and what might have been insisted on their right of intrusion, when the servant brought me a letter that had just been delivered by the postman. It was long before I thought of opening it, but at length, finding my ideas would settle on nothing but those forgone scenes, the recollection of which formed all my melancholy, I opened the letter, on a chance that its contents might for a moment turn me from my source perpetual of inward wo. But what words shall describe my astonishment when I found that the letter was from Agnes! I will not give myself the misery of describing all the heart-rending circumstances that this letter contained. Suffice it to say, it was too apparent from its contents that Warner, having begun his course in villainy, had continued it in hard-hearted brutality, and that my gentle, kind, misled Agnes had, from the first hour of her marriage with him, been his slave rather than his wife. Long, very long had she borne this: ignorance of her parents' fate—spy-like watchfulness to prevent the least communication with England—and cruel tauntings on her early regards for me, formed the basis of that superstructure of wretchedness which Warner, in mere recklessness of cruelty, delighted to build around her. Yet still she was the patient wife. But even patience such as hers was to be exhausted! in a moment of anger brought on by the last of suffering, she reproached him with the miseries he had heaped upon her. It was then indeed that the fiend was let loose: the bully, the tyrant, and the traitor were charactered three in one; and his raging eagerness to make his victim writhe to the very marrow under his harrowing words made him tell all that he had heretofore concealed. With fiendlike bursts of laughter he described how I had been cheated by his devilish arts—in the same spirit he narrated my unwearied search through Europe for the fugitives—and with tenfold, with ten times tenfold barbarity he mapped out in living colours the broken-heartedness of her parents, their still-lingering hope when yet expectation was dead, their death with blank despair for her fate, deep-seated in their just palpitating bosoms. Of all these things he had with cunning wile taken care to inform himself, and what wanted detail he filled out with drafts upon his own demoniac invention. Till this moment Agnes had with resolved spirit of endurance borne every thing that he had heaped upon her. But the die was now cast—the fiend incarnate stood confessed before her—and deeply within herself did she vow that never again would she dwell or exchange word with the man whom in an evil moment she had made her husband. All this, with many accusations against herself, did she detail to me; and her letter concluded by throwing herself on what she painfully called my generosity for a little pittance for herself and her two children, with whom she had already eloped from her husband.

"Generosity!—Gracious Heaven! was it not I that had brought her to this? The mad freak of my hey-day blood had cast her into the arms of a wretch on whom the most abandoned of the sex would have been ill bestowed,

if deserts were to form his claim: was it not I that had been the originator of this mountain of ill that was overwhelming the frail tenor of her life? And to appeal to my generosity after that! Oh, Agnes, how my heart bounded when I read the word, to pour at thy feet in act of merest justice the uttermost farthing of my wild wanderings in search of thee had yet left me to bestow!

"But I wander from the letter. Agnes told me that in Geneva she had found a friend—too poor indeed to assist her with money, but rich enough in honour and in conscience to be trusted with worlds and worlds' worth, to whom I was to address my answer. 'But, remember,' added she, 'that answer is to be in writing—the first attempt to discover me separates us for ever not only in person but in act, for never from that moment can I receive kindness or bounty from you. I say this for both our sakes: our coming together would be the renewal of grief which can never be so healed by absence as to be forgotten, and which a meeting would inevitably lay open to fresh anguish and torture.'

"I could not deny the wisdom of this decision, but I felt a bitter pang at the necessity that there was for our still remaining separate. There was, however, no alternative; and by return of post I sent her my answer, directed to Madame Lalande, her friend at Geneva, to whom I also wrote, requesting that she would suffer no opportunity to slip in acquainting me with whatever changes might take place in Agnes' situation.

"At this time you, Madeline, were but seven years old, and Albert not quite five. Your mother, through the recommendation of Madame Lalande, installed herself in the Single Cottage at Unwalden; and years passed on, which, if they did not bring happiness to her poor broken spirit, at least afforded her outward peace, and was a sort of paradise compared with the daily and hourly torture of mind she underwent while at the beck of her ill-conditioned husband. At the suggestion of the same kind lady, your mother not only altered her name, but changed your Christian names also, to prevent, as far as possible, any attempt that Warner might make in tracing your retreat, and from that day you became Albert and Madeline Schvolen.

"There is, however, reason to believe that all his attempts to find you were in vain, and that he never traced your mother's retreat even as far as Geneva. I caused inquiry to be made at Florence, at which place he was residing when your mother fled from him; and, subsequently, at Rome and Naples, whither he was known to have gone in pursuit of her. At Naples it is probable that he met with an untimely end, for in a drunken frolic he made a wager with one of his Bacchanalian companions to penetrate the fortresses of the famous Abruzzi bandit Latroni, and join his troop for one week. He set out on this mad attempt, and doubtless perished in the effort, for never since has he been heard of. As your mother, however, had thought proper to change her name, I resolved, when I deemed it my duty to seek her retreat at Unwalden, to do the same—not from any apprehensions that I myself entertained, but that I might in every way prove to her the desire that I had to cultivate her tranquillity of mind. It is for this reason that you have always known me by the name of Seaton, and not by that of Mervyn.

"Now let me come to the cause of my visit to Unwalden, and so arrive at the end of the painful task I have been obliged to impose on myself. About three weeks before my arrival here, and while yet at Morfield, I received a letter from Madame Lalande, in which she gave so distressing a picture of your mother's declining health, that I resolved, at all hazards, to visit Unwalden in the hopes of alleviating her sufferings. I felt that the certainty of Warner's death could be better urged upon her by myself than any other person, and I still cherished the hope that happiness might be in store for us.

"I reached Unwalden; but you know the rest, and my task is at an end.

"Again and again, I have fearful misgivings on the step I am about to take. You are the children of Agnes, and from the first moment I saw you, I forgot in that consideration who your other parent was. But the scene which has taken place between me and Madeline has roused it all within my heart. Do not be angry with me, child, when I say that I saw in it some of the first buddings of your father's violent temperament—a sacrifice of the sense of what is right at the shrine of passion and impulse. Perhaps this very thing ought to arrest me, in the hope of crushing this early seed by timely care, and it is this that makes me doubt the step to which I am impelled. But with shame I confess that I am unequal to the task. I am a shaken—pithless creature—my spirit gone—my strength of mind exhausted; and disappointment is the landmark of my existence.

"I go then, and, in the words of your mother, I say 'the first attempt you make to discover me separates us for ever, not only in person, but in act.' You will find by the enclosed papers that I have made sufficient provision for your worldly welfare.

"Fare ye well, dear ones! Think of me sorrowfully—not angrily; and ever as the hot and evil passions of our nature come over you, let my last words come upon your recollection to moderate your temper and awaken better feelings in your bosom.

"And these are my last words. Be unto one another as the eye is to the understanding. Let the one be ever ready to picture the truth, and the other to give a just interpretation to the record. Be unto one another as the blossom is to the fruit—the one forerunning an excellent maturity—the other repaying the early foundation from which sprang all its sweetness.

"Fare the well, Madeline! Fare thee well, Albert! Think of me, and of your mother; and be more happy than either, by learning to avoid the errors from which we have reaped misery for so many years.

"HENRY SEATON."

CHAPTER V.

He, seeing her depart, arose up light,
Right rose agrieved at her sharp reproof,
And followed fast; but when he came in sight
He durst not nigh approach, but kept aloof,
For dread of her displeasure's utmost proof.

THE FAIRIE QUEEN.

I charge thee never after this sad day
To see me, or to meet me; or to send
By word, or writing, gift, or otherwise,
To move me, by thyself, or by thy friends.

HEYWOOD'S WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS.

THUS then their fate was sealed: the world to them was an open and unprofitable waste: they had but themselves to cherish and make much of their misery, for he that should have cared for them was gone, and strangers girt them in on every side.

Sorrow was deep-seated in their hearts. The gentle Albert, gentle as the gentlest portion of his mother's bland spirit, would have wept, not in reproach at his sister's fault, but in sorrow for the kind friend whose smile had been so welcome, and whose motive seemed ever to be their happiness, but who now was as dead to them as the poor Agnes, who at last had found quiet beneath the sod—her first and only resting-place. But even

tears did the youth forbid himself when he gazed upon the countenance of his sister, settled into anguish of the deepest die. The letter had told him enough of his sister's fault to make him understand the extremity of her sorrow; but the only advantage he took of his so-gained knowledge was to throw his arms around the poor girl's neck, in the hope of soothing the violence of her grief.

Madeline understood the appeal; and, though neither of them yet had found words to express the sensations that were beating at their hearts, she pressed her brother closer and closer to her bosom, as though she would more and more tangibly assure herself that he at least of all her sometime good was left to comfort her.

Thus for awhile they paused before affliction found its vent. Presently tears flowed bountifully down Madeline's cheeks, and taught Albert's honest eyes to overflow.

When grief has mastery, tears are the presages of words. It is as though the sluices of humanity being ready to be opened, those liquid mute appellants were ever for the van, gently to prepare the way for more sounding demonstration. Let eyes discharge their waters of affliction, and lips are trembling on the instant to avouch their truth.

So with them.

"Madeline—my sister!" said the boy, "let us not in our sorrow forget the only reparation we have it in our power to make to our kind and unhappy uncle; for still must I call this Henry Seaton by the name he taught us. The concluding words of his letter should be a never-failing lesson to our heart—more cherished, more regarded, and more followed than the precepts of philosophy, or the truths of nature. Bethink you, my sister, the good man may repent his resolution; and, should he return, what joy, what pride for us, to be able to hold out his own letter to him, and when he asks our doings while he was away, to have for answer, 'The whole has been but a paraphrase of this your own dictation.'"

At the thought of the possibility of Seaton's return Madeline's heart fluttered with a momentary hope; but it was but a passing expectation, for, when she remembered the sad and serious resolutions he had penned, she felt that such a hope was vain, and that they had indeed lost his protection for ever. The whole was a thought of less than a minute, and in reply to Albert she shook her head in mournful silence.

"Nay, dear Madeline, if he return not," continued the youth, made eloquent by the fulness of his affection for the sorrowing maid, "even if he return not, be assured he is not altogether absent. We may not be able to refer to him for each petty event of our lives, but have we not in his letter a general rule for all that more deeply concerns us? And more than this, my heart teaches me, and will not have the truth of the lesson denied, that, though absent in person, our uncle will still hold watch over us, ready to intervene his friendly arm when danger threatens most."

Still poor Madeline shook her head. Albert understood her; it was as though she would have said, "Oh that that were true!"

"And why not true?" continued her brother; "remember the many weary years his zeal urged him on through Europe's various countries to seek his Agnes; think of the kindness of heart that on Madame Lalande's first intimation tore him away from his habits and long-accustomed home at Morfield to seek our mother's dying bed. Is he not the same man? Do not the same affections and the same goodness still possess his heart? And does not his letter—that sad farewell—abound to the very final syllable with an iteration of the same spirit of love?"

But Madeline still wept for her uncle, and would not be comforted. So much solace as the words of Albert conveyed was in its turn destroyed by the thought that this poor boy, too, as well as herself, was left desolate by

the unguarded vehemence of her temper. Albert, whom nature in its unkindness had rendered most needful of a protector, by her had been deprived of one—the best, the kindest, and the most affectionate. The thought was overwhelming, and forth in a fresh paroxysm burst her grief.

"Sister," said Albert, almost desperate at the task imposed upon him, "we have but one course to pursue. We will quit Unwalden, and even, as Seaton has done before us, search Europe for our uncle."

Madeline's eyes brightened at the idea. She thought of the eagerness with which she would search each village and each town: her imagination pictured to her with what devotion she would run to the world's extremity for Seaton. Young, romantic, and imaginative, she almost conceived that in the eloquence of her heart she could persuade kings to sanction, and emperors to proclaim rewards for the discovery of the lost one.

"And yet," continued Albert, "may we forget the caution in his letter? 'The first attempt you make to discover me separates us for ever, not only in person, but in act'"

The picture was on the instant reversed to Madeline's gaze. Would a man with such a resolution in his heart be found? What were *they?* The children of inexperience, and Unwalden all their earth. What *he?* A man of travels, learned in all the difficulties of a journey. How was one full in his experience of routes and countries to be dogged by a pair, whose only knowledge was the honesty of the single sentiment that would pervade their hearts?

But again Albert spoke; and, as his lips moved, his whole expression brightened at the thought he was about to convey to his sister.

"Madeline," cried he, "will not this do? Unwalden we will quit—Geneva we will seek—It is there that Madame Lalande lives. She is the friend of Seaton; and be assured either we shall find him there, or at least he will have left token with her what his movements are likely to be."

These few words again removed a portion of the cloud from Madeline's brow. Up to that moment they had been beating about on the sea of uncertainty—conjecturing, speculating, doubting, wishing, but nothing having. Now something practicable was afloat. Their road to Geneva was plain and easy; it was a postillion's experience, and not their own, on which they had to rely for their route; and when there, it was still to be some one else that was to guide them. They remembered nothing indeed of Madame Lalande, but they could not doubt that she was easily to be met with in Geneva. *They* knew the names of every inhabitant of their own village, and from this deduction it was justly to be argued in their logic that every inhabitant of Geneva knew all his fellows.

With a swiftness of execution which naturally accompanies a temperament so rapid as that of Madeline, she resolved to lose not a moment in proceeding on the journey. Little more than an hour served to communicate the whole of her scheme to Albert, to put the farmer who owned the Single Cottage in present possession of the building till they should return, and to prepare the chaise that was to convey them towards the city, where it was decisive in Madeline's mind that something of Seaton was to be ascertained.

Madeline, her active mind once impregnated with the idea that success was at the bottom of her plan, did all. As for Albert, he was but a machine in her hands—a willing instrument, however, for he saw each moment add fresh brightness to his sister's looks, fresh courage to her eye; so that to him it appeared as if each step that was taken advanced them from misery towards happiness.

The chaise arrived at the Single Cottage: every thing was ready: a moment more, and Albert and Madeline would have had their once happy abode behind them, perhaps never to be revisited. But even before that moment elapsed, their progress was prevented by the appearance of Wah-

rend. He knew nothing of what had taken place; and the usual hour for his visit to the cottage being arrived, he was there, full of expectation that the intercession of the senior had carried his point, and that Madeline was prepared to listen to his proposals.

The chaise at the door was a little beyond his comprehension, but he had no time to inquire of the postillion its destination, for at that instant Madeline made her appearance, fully equipped for her journey.

"What, you the traveller, Madeline!" cried Wahrend; "whither away, dear girl?"

Heavens, what a sensation came over Madeline at that instant! From the moment of Seaton's departure, she had not once given a thought to Wahrend. But now he rushed upon her presence like some ill-omened ghost, and her heart sickened to the death: a thousand thoughts at once took possession of her brain, each harrowing deeper than the other. "Confusion worse confounded" was upon her, and she tottered as though she would have fallen to the earth.

Wahrend, with scarcely time to be astonished, threw his arm round her waist for support.

"My dear Madeline!" exclaimed he.

The perception of being within his embrace restored her strength, and she flung herself from his arms with that sort of expression of horror which escapes the lips when the whole frame's blood is curdling with disgust.

Wahrend was astounded. He had not words wherewith to remonstrate.

"Man," cried Madeline, with uncontrollable energy, "is it not enough that you have robbed me of my mother's dying blessing, and forced my uncle hence, without wringing my heart with a presence that speaks it all in words of bitterest anguish. Evil was the hour when first I saw you! Evil—thrice evil!"

Albert by this time had followed his sister from the cottage. He had already half-guessed that Wahrend was the corner-stone of the dispute between his sister and Seaton, and her manner now confirmed it.

"Sister," whispered he, as she was going on to pour out her wrath against the innocent cause of what had been nurtured into evil fruit by her own ungovernable violence—"Sister, remember our uncle's letter!—Remember the sacredness of our present mission!"

The appeal was effective; for the chord on which it struck was too newly fretted not to be sensitive to the merest touch. Her passion dropped; and she resolved, what a thousand times before had been a resolution, for ever and for ever to master these outrageous proceedings of a hasty mind.

"Wahrend," said she, more gently, "my anger may be wrong; and I will therefore exchange what I intended for a command into a supplication. Never—oh, never again let us meet! Once before I said this to you. Let it now come with tenfold solemnity to your soul; and as you would not inflict fresh misery on a creature all too miserable already, I beseech you never again let us cross each other's path."

Wahrend would have replied, but, too swift for words, she sprang into the carriage, and, having beckoned Albert to follow, the chaise drove off, leaving the poor Swiss as desolate as he was astounded.

CHAPTER VI.

Sweet pleasure.
Delicious pleasure! Earth's supremest good,
The spring of blood, though it dry up our blood.
DECKER.

That which a man is bred up in he thinks no cheating; as your tradesman thinks not so of his profession, but calls it a mystery.—SELDEN'S TABLE TALK.

THE orphans' road to Geneva led them through the village of Unwalden. It would have saved them both something of pain had it been otherwise, for the sight of the well-known objects which each moment flitted past them awakened them to a sense of the danger of the step they were taking; and the "curious busy eye" of the street-loiterers that met their gaze, told them that all beyond what might be called their native village was a perilous maze of uncertainty and suspicion. They were quitting—for ever, perhaps—the only place where they were known—the only place they knew. All the rest of the world was to them as the great African desert is to the eager merchant that seeks the cities beyond its fearful bounds. Albert, to a certain extent, was in leading-strings; he had resigned himself to the guidance of his elder and more venturous companion, and whatever misgivings he might have were more than compensated by the thought that the act, in the commission of which he was engaged, was furnishing satisfaction to the human being that he loved best. The lad's heart was a sea of affection that knew no ebb, but was ever ready to acknowledge the impulse of the spring-tide of love. But Madeline, the more he resigned himself to her, the more she had to consider; and the thoughts that possessed her, as she passed through Unwalden, were fit and comparable associates for those which Cæsar held when he stood in debate with Pollio on the banks of the Rubicon. It was not too late to return. Seaton by his letter had placed a skaunt mirror before her eyes, and had compelled her to see every thing "with a difference." Was she indeed in the commencement of an attempt that should deprive Albert and herself of the very means of existence? Could Seaton really have been in earnest when he threatened that an effort to find him would cause him to withdraw his bounty?

This was a heart-heavy question; and more than once the word trembled on her lips that should stop the postillion, and cause him to return to the Single Cottage.

But presently other thoughts relieved the feverish anxiety of her mind. What was her motive? Surely any thing but selfishness, or a cold-hearted indifference to the happiness of others. She wanted to restore Albert to Seaton's fostering protection. For herself, she cared not. Give her but an opportunity to throw herself at her uncle's feet, and ask his forgiveness for what had been rash, but not wicked, in her conduct, and she would not flinch at his casting her off, and leaving the world and her to fight out the battle of good and evil.

This thought resolved her. She would go on:—nay, she would do more. With the sincerest hope of showing what amelioration, genuine penitence and sorrow could work upon her mind, she would summon that mind to the use of all its proper and native strength: she would dismiss the more worthless particles of grief, and only reserve so much as should give sobriety and dignity to her purpose.

There was something consolatory in all this; it cheered her to the labours that were fast spreading before her, and it braced her heart to that vigour of action which would command half the victory.

Albert, to whom her countenance was as a never-ending book, read what her passing thoughts there set down; and before the carriage arrived at the inn where they were to stop for the night, both brother and sister felt that half their troubles were over, in the consciousness that they had gained strength to bear the whole of them.

The auberge, at which they put up, was a delightful specimen of a Swiss road-side inn. The low roof, far spreading beyond the walls which it sheltered, was nearly overrun with the luxuriance of a vine, which, in its turn, crept up those walls to shelter the roof: near at hand stood a rude model of "purple Bacchus, jolly god;" and the tendrils of the luxuriant creeper seemed to stretch towards him, that they might afford him a crown worthy of his reputation. The deep panelled door, always open to welcome the wayfarer, proclaimed an age gone by; while the smoking chimney as evidently announced that hospitality had not yet forsaken the antique dwelling.

When our two young travellers descended from their conveyance, they were ushered into the kitchen—that huge receptacle for all sorts of guests, from the highest to the lowest on the Continent—where sat two or three of that mixed sort which might be expected to be the chance product of such a place. Albert and Madeline both cast their eyes uneasily round the room, for both felt that at that moment they were no fit companions for so promiscuous a company; there were many things yet to be talked over, many points to be considered, all of which required solitude and quiet.

Madeline at length took courage to inquire for a private room, though she hardly knew whether in so doing she was not infringing the rule of road into which that day was her first initiation; and truly it is not every inn in Switzerland that can boast of the accommodation which she was seeking. Fortune, however, this time was on her side, and the good woman of the house showed them into a little apartment up stairs, adorned with a venerable portrait of William Tell, or Moses; for on this particular there was a standing dispute of many years between the hostess and her husband—where every thing seemed as promising of tranquillity and uninterruptedness as even Madeline could desire.

Scarcely, however, were they fairly established in their retirement, when the sound of horses' hoofs was heard clattering at the door of the hostel. Madeline, with the thought of Seaton ever uppermost in her mind, could not help casting a glance from the window of her apartment, with a hope that was hardly acknowledged to herself. That one glance, however, was sufficient to check the embryo, for her eye told her at once that there was no uncle among the gay and noisy party that had just made the road-side inn their resting-place.

But who is he that rides so gay and debonair among the foremost of the knot? It is the young Count de Mara, the pride of the party, the very oracle and chief commander of the troop, the aspiring spirit to whom all lesser looked for the life of the day, the high master and promoter of all their mad revels and hey-day frolics.

As we have said, it was not alone that De Mara approached the road-side inn. Half a dozen sparkling gallants rode in his company, and ever and anon they made the old rocks that overhung the road by which they travelled echo to their laughter. The joke, the bon-mot, and the repartee passed briskly from the one to the other; but it was when the count spoke that the loudest laugh followed; and it was in answer to his tropes and figures that the gay welcome of enjoyment was most freely ceded. He was, as it were, the Mercury of the party; the very head and front of all

that was joyous amongst them, and from whom the remainder were content to borrow their tone and lustre.

"An inn! and in good time!" cried the young Chevalier Altoz, who was the first to perceive the abode where we have for awhile safely housed the orphans of Unwalden.

"Gentlemen," said the count, "I know what admirable Quixotes ye be—Altoz claiming no less than to come from Mancha himself. For the nonce we will castellate yonder inn, that we may adjudge ourselves the more honour in taking it by storm. Forward! Charge!"—

And away the party galloped for their destination, pricking their horses to as venturous a pace as though their course lay over some wide undeviating plain, instead of along a track barely nicked into the slant of a rock, with a cliff on the one hand and a precipice on the other.

They neared the inn, and in another minute clattered up to the door, each at his fullest speed. The landlord was pretty well aghast at this new accession of company: it was something quite out of his routine, and he knew no more of what would be fitting behaviour to put on, than if he had been called upon at the moment to give the becoming salaam to the Emperor of China on being summoned to the footstep of the celestial throne. One look was a sufficer; he saw that the whole cortége was beyond his element, and he left the affair in the more skilful hands of his wife.

She, good woman, fumed and bustled; but it was not much that remained for her to do. The intruders, finding the door open, took it for granted that the garrison surrendered at discretion; whereon they rushed into the kitchen to see what plunder was to be had, and, after awhile, called on the landlord, *quà* commandant, to offer his terms of capitulation.

The landlord, however, declined in favour of the hostess. It was a wise policy: the besiegers, in regard to the fair sex, consented to sink the castle, and stand upon the fact of their being mere guests at an inn.

Wine was brought; such eatables as the place could afford were produced; and in a few minutes the roof of the kitchen was taught, as the rocks before it, to echo to the tune of their merriment.

"But, most noble count," cried Altoz, taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, "with all respect for the powers and skill of so renowned a leader, will it not please you to allow your followers by this time to know the reasons for bringing them so many miles from Geneva?"

"And on so rough a road too!" said another of the party: "as I hope to see Geneva again, and never more look down a precipice five hundred feet deep with blackness at the bottom;—nothing but a most just reason will content me."

"A reason you would have," cried the count; "listen to a most just one. I brought you here for pleasure!"

"Pleasure!" exclaimed three or four at once.

"I claim the right of interpreting," said one who might be taken for the eldest of the party, and who on that ground was desirous of being held somewhat oracular in his observations.

"List, oh, list to the Pythoness," cried Altoz.

"For shame, chevalier," joined the count; "what! make an old woman of Maravelli, and at least a year before his time too?"

"Nor only that," added the one who had complained of the roughness of the road, and whom De Mara ludicrously distinguished by the title of 'Mon Petit,' to which he had about as small a claim as the celebrated English Little John of Greenwood-tree fame—"nor only that, but an old woman, and a witch to boot—else I have forgotten my schooling."

"The laws against witchcraft in Switzerland are very severe," gravely remarked Altoz.

"Nay, be of good cheer, Maravelli," said the count; "it is only in Ca-

tholic Switzerland that they will give you the chance of sinking or swimming: here you may enjoy your *otium cum dignitate*, secure under the banner of Calvin."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, I demand fair play," cried Maravelli somewhat hastily: "you are fond of calling yourselves 'The Knot,'—and with good cause, for you draw so close together that one cannot get in a word among ye. Here you have set me down for a witch without waiting to learn whether I had wisdom enough to support the character."

"Good reason why," cried Altoz; "we judged your merits by the beard."

This produced a laugh against the Italian, for of all things he prided himself on the care with which he cultivated the adornment to which Altoz had so maliciously alluded.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, peevishly, "if you choose to let the count off at my expense it is all very well."

"Truly remarked," cried Mon Petit; "I claim a verdict against the count, or a sufficing reason from him, for my whole frame is involved in one perpetual ache with the jolting I and my horse have received over these intolerable roads. The animal is twenty louis worse in value than when he quitted his stable this morning."

"I will stand," said De Mara, "on the reason I have already given. I brought you here for pleasure."

"And I will stand on my interpretation," cried Maravelli, again pushing himself forward: "the count has omitted a little word wherein lies the difference; not for pleasure, but for *his* pleasure has he brought us here."

"Maravelli is a wise interpreter," cried Mon Petit, "on the faith of a jolted gentleman."

"Then is he a good witch," said the count, "that stands confessed on his own pleading, and his beard may come off with a *sauve qui peut*."

"The count plays his game skilfully," exclaimed Maravelli, "and hopes to be quit by a counter-attack, but I trust to the support of The Knot that his strength may not escape through my weakness."

"A verdict, or a defence," cried those that were appealed to.

"Now can I call you no other than the most ungrateful of men," replied De Mara; "were you not when I called you together this morning yawning and dozing your faculties away—wondering what next you might do to get rid of the too long hours? Have I not tempted you from the weariness of brick buildings and regulated streets to the rock-raised marvels of nature, and the wildernesses of the same creation, knowing neither law nor rule save the eternal, which hath fitness for its foundation? Have I not in my bounty--but save me from a defence, wherein the poetic has so large a share, in a public kitchen. Yonder bumpkin looks as if he could swallow rocks and wildernesses both at a mouthful."

"The offender," cried Altoz, "has some sort of claim to our consideration, for his defence opened well, though I am afraid that what he admits to be poetic will end in fiction. Call hither our hostess, however, and we will indulge him with a private room. Good dame," continued he, seeing the landlady at hand, "what can you do for us in the way of an apartment to ourselves?"

The hostess, thus queried, was full of apologies, that her house could afford no better accommodation for persons of their rank; but the only room to which the term private could be given, was already occupied by a young lady and gentleman, who were resting there for the night on their journey towards Geneva.

"Are you quite sure," cried Maravelli, "that there is a gentleman as well as a lady of the party? for if not," added he, looking significantly at the count, "I should be strongly confirmed in interpretation of the word 'pleasure,' which I so lately offered to the notice of The Knot."

"Oh dear, yes," said the hostess; "the gentleman is the brother of mademoiselle; but, poor young man, he was born deaf;—at least so says Zuroff here, who is well acquainted with Unwalden, from which place they are travelling to Geneva. For my part, I can't think how they have taught him to speak so prettily, if he can't hear a word that has been said to him all his life."

"The young lady," cried Altoz, "must find him but dull company. What say you hostess, will you be the bearer of our respects, and an addition to the effect that we shall be glad to join her company for the evening, or even to see her safe to Geneva (as it is that road she travels) at her own time and opportunity?"

"I am afraid the message would but ill accord," replied the good dame, "for they both appear in a somewhat melancholy mood, and I could see their eyes glisten so moistly, dear souls, that it seemed to want but little to make their glistening tears."

"Poor things!" cried Mon Petit, "from my soul I pity them: to-morrow's road once attempted, and the tears will be jolted from them, if they are indeed to-night so near the full."

"And so, Goody," asked Altoz, "you hold my message to be naught?"

"Truly, sir, all is naught that injures. The young lady's mind is in no cue for such visiters."

"But are you sure," cried De Mara, "that your conclusions are correct? Instances," added he, looking at Maravelli—"instances have been known of false interpretations of the simplest matters."

"Oh, sir," cried our hostess, somewhat tartly, at having her womanly powers of penetration questioned; "it is no difficult matter to know what downcast looks, unsteady steps, and tearful eyes signify. I would not disturb them, if I had a right; and even that I have not, for the room is theirs till they choose to resign it."

And thus having told all she knew, all she concluded, and all she determined, the good woman set busily about cooking some little dish that Madeline had ordered for supper, and with which she was resolved to take extraordinary pains, as it was to be partaken of by 'the poor young gentleman who was born deaf.'

Maravelli seemed determined to let no interval effect the count's escape; for no sooner had the hostess concluded her little narrative about the interesting pair that were sojourning at her hostel, than he revived the accusation against him again.

"What say you, gentlemen of The Knot," said he, "shall we not generously spare De Mara the trouble of a defence, and in our mercy proceed to judgment? My brain is dancing even now with the universal shaking it has undergone. The least we can do is to mulct him in the day's expenses."

"A judgment! A judgment!" cried two or three of the party.

"Gently, gently, my worthies," interrupted the count; "would you have me declare you to the world the very princes of ingratitude? I will not shrink from any thing in the shape of a fair proposal; and now the whim is on me, will even make one. Here are Maravelli, the complainant, and De Mara, the defendant. I give our respected interpreter this offer. I will wager the day's expenses, which he has so liberally proposed to place to my account, that I not only join the party up-stairs, but am invited to partake—nay, more, actually *do* partake in their supper."

"A fair proposal, and as fairly taken," cried Maravelli. "I accept the wager, but on one condition, that you ask not for the supper, but are freely and fairly invited to it."

"My very terms," said the count.

"But will it be fair," asked Altoz, "after our hostess' pretty story, to

trespass on the poor girl's seclusion? I protest I have quite a picture of their sorrows before my eyes, and am mightily taken with the scene."

"On the faith of a gentleman," answered De Mara, "it shall be done most graciously on my part: perhaps a little romance may creep in, but nothing offensive. Am I not a Frenchman, and the most devoted of my nation to the service of beauty? Tell me, then, when does it look so lovely, and when has it so great a claim on such vows as I have taken in its favour, as when it is overborne by the heaviness of sorrow? The bland smile, the cunning dimple, and the laughing eye, all in my estimation give place to the young bud that has its sweets closed, not crushed, under the clouds of affliction."

"Bravo," cried a Spaniard, one of the party; the fit is on De Mara, and I would not give a maravedi for poor Maravelli's chance."

"It is no fit," said De Mara, "but the settled conviction of my mind. I have no objection to a smile; heaven forbid that I should, for many a sweet one have I had lavished on me. But women always appear to me to think that they were made to smile. They carry their smiles about with them, as they do their parasols in sunny weather; and that man is a bold one who shall undertake to pronounce on the genuineness of each that flits across a lady's cheek. Tell a fair one that she looks like Venus fresh from her native sea, and she smiles while she cries 'Oh, fie!' Tell her that her favourite gossip lies sick of the small-pox, and she smiles, while she cries, 'How I pity the poor soul!'"

"But all this argues nothing in favour of sorrow."

"Pardon me! It gains half the battle. Destroy your opponent's argument, and you have already nearly secured an easy victory for your own. But I have stronger grounds on which to set my position. I am in love with a pretty woman's affliction for its own intrinsic excellences. In the first place, it has novelty to recommend it: a woman never looks grieved for the look's sake: she may falsely write pleasure, sulkiness, slyness, or wisdom, on the look of her countenance, but when sadness is there, it has the heart's honesty to justify it. A woman's heart was never made for grief; its fine elasticity enables it to get rid of sorrow as the breeze of spring drives the April cloud beyond the demi-cerulean; so that what might otherwise be painful has its sting extracted by the reflection, that yet a little, and the eye's dulness will pass away, and you feel that you must be quick in enjoying the melting novelty, or the opportunity will have vanished, and left no trace behind. But novelty is not the only recommendation. Sadness gives a delightful sobriety to a countenance, otherwise too much in sunshine. A picture all gamboge affords no enjoyment—so a face all sunshine, and for ever, approaches the *usque ad nauseam:* if you know not darkness you cannot appreciate the advantage of light; and when you find a lady's face never otherwise than smiling, it is time to suspect a want of meaning—a blank within."

"Most admirably delivered," cried Maravelli, and I begin to fear the fate of my wager."

"And now for its execution," said De Mara;—"you have made your bargain with me, and I, in return, condition that none of The Knot are either to recognise me, or notice my proceedings, whatever they may be, unless I should call upon them to do so."

The condition was accepted, and De Mara withdrew to make his preparations. Zuroff, to whom the landlady had alluded in her conversation, and the postillion that drove the orphans to the auberge, were summoned to his council, in order that he might know, as far as possible, on what grounds he might be able to rest his scheme. Things were put in motion on all hands; and the count, whose very soul was project, seemed absorbed in the luxury his nature derived from the operations in which he was soon plunged to his heart's content.

CHAPTER VII.

What an ill orator has virtue got here!
MIDDLETON AND ROWLEY'S FAIR QUARREL.

Ceremony has made many fools.
It is by timorous honours, pale respects,
Idle degrees of fear, men make their ways
Hard of themselves.—OLD PLAY.

As no one was present at the count's course of inquiry with Zuroff and the postillion, it is difficult to pronounce how much information he obtained from them as to the true state of our young travellers' condition. A departure from Unwalden in a travelling carriage, however, was so far a rarity, that it cannot be doubted that such an event, when coupled with the fact of its being undertaken by a young lad and his sister, who, till that day, had been supposed to form part of the most staid and sober family in the village, gave rise to that freedom of speculation in which people will indulge, who think it preferable to attend to other persons' affairs than to their own. Some of these profound and illustrating speculations must of course have reached the ear of the postillion, for he was in a manner the nucleus wherein all these conjectures centered, seeing that he was the only member connected with the departure at whom the gossips could get for the purpose of talking over their infinite nothings, which formed a budget worthy of Sancho Panza's most talkative intervals.

Whatever the postillion knew, either from his own or these most veritable sources, was most unquestionably made over to De Mara, for it was impossible for the driver of horses to withstand the touch of a louis-d'or, especially when the purchase in return was merely a tale of babble, that, for aught he cared, any body might have had for nothing, when no larger sum was to be got by it. Zuroff's brain fully admitted the force of the same argument; and the consequence was, that their knowledge on the subject, whatever its extent might be, was speedily made over to him who paid so liberal a largesse to obtain it.

We cannot take upon ourselves to say that De Mara was satisfied with the information that had thus been gained. But here was no matter of choice:—it was one of sheer necessity. All that was to be learned for the nonce he had obtained; and on that capital, whether large or small, he was bound by the limit of his wager to trade this venture.

Thus far armed then towards his success, and seeing no obstacle to his at least entering the apartment where Madeline and her brother had taken up their quarters for the evening, he proceeded thither at once, determined to trust to his own vein of invention to excuse the intrusion which he meditated. Matters, however, were not destined to run quite so smooth. Just as he had gained the landing that led to their room, and deemed himself safely within sight of harbour, he was met by the landlady, who was that moment quitting her young guests, having again forced herself upon them in her officiousness to make the orphans, whom she had greatly taken into her favour, as comfortable as her means might afford.

"Sir," cried she, somewhat surprised at finding the nobleman in this forbidden part of the auberge, "you must have mistaken your way. It is down stairs that your friends are carousing."

"By no means," replied De Mara, internally cursing his evil stars at be-

ing thus crossed upon the very threshold of the undertaking—"by no means, my good lady. It is your wine, and not I, that has mistaken the way. The air below is somewhat close:—now, in yonder room, if I might be indulged with a window-seat and five minutes' enjoyment of the mountain breeze, I will warrant the abatement of the oppressiveness I feel."

"It is no bedchamber, that," said the hostess, drily:—"nor does it even contain a couch; and without the one or the other, I fear the relief you seek is somewhat questionable."

"Oh, for shame, hostess, for shame!" cried De Mara, "would you do your own liquor so little credit as to insinuate that it must be slept off? I tell you, dame, five inspirations of pure air from yon window, of which I caught a glimpse as you opened the door, would work a miracle towards my recovery, and save the character of your vintage into the bargain."

"Sir, to be brief, into that room you must not enter. I pray you in courtesy to descend——"

"I never descend," interrupted the count with a laugh, "especially after a carouse.—*Va là!* In good sooth I must pass." And he began playfully to endeavour to elude the hostess, who resolutely kept her ground between him and the door of Madeline's apartment, while she cried—"Now, good sir:—indeed, as a gentleman;—you will force me to call the servants!"

The count in part gained his point;—not, indeed, that he obtained an ingress, but she whom he sought appeared at the door by which he would have entered.

"Good hostess," said Madeline, mournfully, "I entreat that this noise may be spared. I am as one distraught already."

"Indeed," replied the mistress of the auberge, more than ever angered that her guest should have been disturbed, "indeed, it rests not with me. This uncivil person—for I no longer know him as a gentleman—would have forced an entrance into your apartment, and I only sought to stop him."

"Force an entrance!" cried Madeline, and her eye half-kindled to its wonted fire at the thought of her melancholy privacy being intruded upon.

The nobleman saw his danger, and that there was not a moment to spare, for scarcely so long did the opportunity promise to last.

"Nay," cried he, "one word in defence! Our hostess has somewhat overcharged the statement. I was but faint with heat, and sought the nearest window, little imagining that in so doing I should disturb any lady's right of solitude. I wish," added he, suffering his tone to brighten on, perceiving that the maiden bowed in acknowledgment of his apology, "I wish that the good dame would take a lesson from the way in which I saw another of her sisterhood tend a traveller this morning on his road to Geneva. The poor old gentleman seemed to have ridden to the utmost of his strength, for scarcely was he off his horse, when his head drooped, and his countenance turned ashy pale."

Madeline was caught in the first cast of the wily fisher's net. An elderly stranger on his way to Geneva, his strength worn out with riding. The whole picture stuck hard upon her heart.

"Ah, my obstinate hostess," continued De Mara, warily following up his advantage, "then might you have taken a lesson from the good dame of the *Bouteille de Vin*. Had you seen how she cherished the elder—how she pillowed his weak head on her shoulder—how she supported his tottering steps into the house—you would have felt proud of the opportunity my dizziness lately afforded you of imitating so admirable an example."

"Good sir," cried Madeline, eagerly, "I pray you walk in. The window and the room are heartily at your service. Perhaps," continued she, with a slight tremor in her voice—and they entered the room together—"perhaps you may remember somewhat further of this story. I—I—feel deeply interested—in—"

And then no longer able to withhold herself, she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"Dear madam," exclaimed the count, soothingly, "any thing I may remember or know is entirely at your command. The gentleman, of whom I spoke, was a reverend elder—if I might guess, I should say a clergyman, save that the serenity of his countenance, which I could trace to be its habit, was disturbed, and convulsive involuntary movements would spread themselves over his fine face, as though it were responsive to the inward workings of a troubled heart."

"'Tis he! 'tis he!" sobbed Madeline. "Oh that mine had been the shoulder—the bosom to pillow his afflicted head! By all that is sacred, I entreat you to guide me to the inn where you left him in his sorrow. Why should the darkness of night stay us? A heavier darkness overshadows his peace, and a thousand guilty stings call on me to speed to his injured presence, and sigh out my repentance at his feet."

De Mara was somewhat confounded at the suddenness of this request. For himself, he did not care much about the proprieties, but it was somewhat beyond his calculation to find so young and beautiful a female thus throwing herself upon the honour and guidance of a stranger at a bare moment's notice. The most annoying point, however, was, that he was a little too far involved in fiction to avail himself of the offer; for, with all his ingenuity, he doubted whether he could find a *Bouteille de Vin*, where an elderly gentleman had been so obliging as to faint away for the occasion. Consummate, then, as he was in the arts of deceit, the whole of these difficulties, facing him at once, made him pause for a moment ere he furnished a reply to the maiden's eager petition.

"You hesitate!" cried Madeline:—indeed—indeed—"

"If I hesitate," answered the count, "it is from the fear that what I have to say may wound your excited feelings more than I could wish."

Madeline became alarmed, and the blood was with her cheek, and away again, in less than a moment. At length—"if," said she, "there is yet worse for me to hear, be merciful, and deliver it quickly. You would say that my uncle—"

"Your uncle! Was that reverend indeed your uncle?—Then it was fortunate that I stayed at the *Bouteille de Vin* long enough to see the end of the affair."

"Fortunate!—End!" cried Madeline; "oh, for mercy, what end?"

"Nay, be not alarmed," answered the count. "When I said that I might wound your feelings, it was because I had to confess my incompetency to conduct you to your uncle; for before I quitted the *Bouteille de Vin*, he had so far recovered from the fatigue which had overpowered him as to mount his horse again, and proceed on his road towards Geneva."

Madeline for the moment felt relieved. It was true she had lost her present chance of meeting with Seaton, but she had gained the knowledge that that which had raised such terrible apprehensions in her mind had passed off as a momentary sickness, and not unfitted him whom she sought for the renewal of his journey.

"But perhaps," continued she after a pause, and with one sole object still in view—"perhaps he mentioned at the inn where he was likely to stay on his arrival at Geneva?"

"That could hardly be," returned the nobleman, "for I was with him the whole time that he rested at the *Bouteille de Vin;* and I could not avoid observing that there was a secresy about his intentions, which he was determined to preserve, and which appeared to have entire concealment of his motions for its object."

Madeline sighed; but still her heart was somewhat at rest with the thought that she had procured certain information of Seaton's progress to

Geneva, and that Madame Lalande's abode there still furnished a hope that she might be able to trace him as soon as she reached that city.

The recurrence of that lady's name to her thoughts brought it to her utterance.

"May I ask, sir," said she, "if you are an inhabitant of Geneva?"

"It is at present my abode," replied the count, "but I am a native of France."

"Possibly you may know a lady of the name of Lalande, a resident in Geneva?"

The count was obliged to acknowledge himself ignorant on that point; "but was it essential to mademoiselle to procure that lady's address?"

The answer to this question led to further conversation, in the course of which Madeline, who in her calamitous situation was ready to look upon any one that would listen to her misfortunes in the light of a friend, was induced to relate the circumstances which had brought her thus far from Unwalden on her road to Geneva. The stranger had already shown himself interested in her story; he had even in a manner acted a part in the little drama of the day; and she saw no necessity to suppress those fuller details, of which he had already gathered the outlines by those passionate exclamations to which she had yielded when the memory of Seaton was so vividly presented to her mind. It is one of the attributes of a frank and candid disposition, uncontaminated by the world's cold selfishness, to believe that all others, with which it may come in contact, are cast in the same mould; and it adopts in all the consciousness of its own sincerity of intention the first overtures that are made to it in the way of kindness.

It is impossible for words to do justice to the manner in which Madeline related her simple story; and Count de Mara, all-accomplished as he was in the ways of women, was compelled to acknowledge to himself that this was nature indeed—nature in her loveliest shape, to which till that moment he had been a stranger. Up to this period he had looked upon the knowledge and interpretation of women as a sort of science, to which by right of innumerable instances he had fully attained. But here was something with which he had never met before. It was impossible to resist the enthusiastic praises which Madeline lavished on the care-bent Seaton; it was impossible to gainsay the generous indignation with which she upbraided herself for having caused his departure so abruptly and unkindly; it was impossible to listen to the sweet flow of eloquence with which she bedecked her brother's character without believing that he must be every thing worthy of being loved, if capable of drawing such words from a being, herself so lovely and persuasive.

It was well for the count, perhaps, that Madeline's ardent detail called for no interruption on his part; or, with all his ready wit and spirit of invention, he might have forgotten the character up to which he had to act, and have so irretrievably lost himself in truth as to be unable to recover the tortuous path which he loved so well, and out of which (so much had habit prevailed) he felt himself beyond his element.

Ere she paused, however, he had found time to resolve his mind as to what course he would pursue; and with this object before him, he led her to speak of her future prospects—of what she expected, what she hoped, and what she feared.

"But after all," continued Madeline, "the whole must depend on my meeting with Madame Lalande. After what I have related to you," added she, "you will not be surprised when I tell you that I look upon this old friend of my mother as the best known hope I have in the world, either to restore me to my uncle, or, in his absence, to guide my steps aright."

De Mara's eyes kindled at this announcement, which so well accorded with the plan that he had already concocted in his mind.

Madeline perceived it. "You smile, sir," said she; "I hope it bodes good fortune for your suppliant."

"It is at the thought that I may be able to discover this Madame Lalande for you," replied the count.

"Oh, sir, do that, and indeed you will prove my friend."

"I have a friend below," continued De Mara, "who is much better acquainted with Geneva than I can pretend to be, as he has resided there for some years. We will consult him, with your permission; and at all events, if he knows not the lady, he may be able to point out some method by which her place of residence is likely to be found."

Madeline entreated the count to request the presence of his friend immediatety; and he accordingly withdrew for that purpose.

Ere many minutes had elapsed, and almost before Madeline had found time to communicate by signs to Albert what was taking place in the prosecution of their object, De Mara returned with the Chevalier Altoz, and introduced him by that name to the lady.

"We are indeed fortunate," continued the count, "for the chevalier is not only acquainted with Madame Lalande by name, but has a slight personal knowledge of her also; so that you have only to reach Geneva to meet with her directly."

Madeline could hardly believe that she heard aright, for so convinced was she, that through Madame Lalande she should be able to trace Seaton, that the finding this lady appeared to her to be the cast upon which she had set her soul; and to have the introduction to her thus easily unravelled, was an event almost beyond her expectation; for, although on Albert first originating the idea, the thing had appeared easy to her unsophisticated mind, yet subsequent reflection, and some conversation which she had had on the matter with the postillion and the hostess, had had the effect of considerably damping her hopes.

"And may I trust to your friend," said she, almost with rapture in her voice, "to guide me to the dear lady, on whom all my hopes of happiness are now resting?"

"Most assuredly," said Altoz; "and I cannot but congratulate myself on being able at so cheap a rate to oblige a lady, who has a right, both from circumstances and appearance, to command all my services."

"And what sort of a lady is my dear Madame Lalande?" asked Madeline, whose heart was overflowing at the thought of meeting her on the morrow, and who was eager to be prepared on all points for the approaching interview.

Altoz looked somewhat confused, while De Mara stopped any thing he might have attempted to say with a laugh, observing—"Poor chevalier! you could not have asked him a more unlucky question. Sorry am I already to have to announce my friend's failings on so short an acquaintance; but, in honest truth, never was there a man of less observation. If he had seen Madame Lalande a thousand times, I will venture to say he would hardly know whether she was a giant or a dwarf. I can give it you as a fact ——"

"No facts, De Mara," cried Altoz with a half-blush: "as to your comments, when this lady knows you as well as I do, she will understand the spirit in which they are made, and heed them as little."

"Oh, but you must have the fact," continued the count, "it illustrates so beautifully. Believe me, dear madam, this gentleman, modest though he seems, had the assurance, when in Spain, to propose to some Don Magnifico or another for his daughter; and by dint of certain rumours that went abroad touching the largeness of his fortune and the ancient blood that flowed in his veins, he obtained permission to make a visit of form. His audience lasted an hour and a half. Heaven only knows what Sir

Bashful found to say to occupy all that time; but when I sought him to learn his success, and was all impatience for a most florid description of the lady, he positively broke down on the very first stage, not being quite sure whether her hair was auburn or black."

The laugh that De Mara raised against his friend by this anecdote was interrupted by the entry of the landlady, who, with not the pleasantest look in the world, whispered Madeline.

"Let the supper be brought in," said the maiden aloud, "for I trust both these gentlemen will give me the favour of their company."

Altoz gave the count a look of participating triumph, as much as to say, "So your wager is won!" While the hostess, astonished at the fluctuation of her young guest, who but a short time before had made it her special request to be left alone and uninterrupted, protested that she had only prepared enough for two, and that were the party doubled, she should be unable to provide sufficient.

"My good friend, the hostess," said De Mara with a laugh, "need not alarm herself, for both the chevalier and myself are absolutely compelled to reach Geneva to-night, and consequently have not the hour to spare which otherwise would be so well bestowed, of availing ourselves of mademoiselle's obliging invitation."

Altoz stared as if he did not well comprehend the game his friend was playing; but at length imagining that he was only fighting off to be pressed more zealously to stay, he exclaimed, "Do not you think our business at Geneva might be postponed till to-morrow?"

"I trust so indeed," added Madeline, "for I had hoped to be ushered by you into Geneva, that my meeting with Madame Lalande might be rendered the more assured."

"That meeting most assuredly shall be made certain," replied the nobleman, "though unavoidable business prevents our staying to superintend your journey to the city. The roads, however, are perfectly safe, and your postillion to-morrow morning will drive you under your directions to the hotel which is known by the name of the *Coq d'Or*, where it shall be our care to be in attendance to receive you, for the purpose of conducting you to Madame Lalande at least, if any unforeseen circumstance should prevent her coming to the hotel."

"Many, many thanks for the trouble you are taking," said Madeline; "the delight you will see depicted on my brother's countenance and mine, should it lead to the recovery of my uncle, will, I think, reward you."

The count bowed his acknowledgments, and then, after a somewhat more formal leave-taking, in which he was joined by Altoz, the two gentlemen withdrew.

CHAPTER VIII.

The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild-scatter'd, clothe their ample sides,
Th' outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills.—BURNS.

The one of them, the false Duessa night,
That now had changed her former wonted hue;
For she could don so many shapes in sight,
As ever could cameleon colours new;
So could she forge all colours save the true.
THE FAERIE QUEENE.

"IN the name of wonder," said Altoz to his friend, as they descended the stairs, "what is the meaning of this? It is a new movement of pride for the most redoubtable and unaccountable Count De Mara to be within grasp of his object, and then throw down the whole machinery, as children in a pet get rid of a house of cards. Now, prithee, what was it? Did my countship smell garlic when the hostess opened the door to announce supper? Or is the rumour true, that even the stoutest heart quakes at the displeasure of a landlady?"

"Most admirably spoken!" replied De Mara, with a laugh; "what pity that 'twas not grounded in common sense! Oh, most short-sighted friend, cannot you imagine that I may have been so struck with the girl upstairs as to wish to find in her something beyond a mere supper acquaintance?"

"In truth, I guessed as much," said the chevalier; "but that only serves to make the thing stranger. Rome was not built in a day; and to my simple comprehension, an accepted supper invitation, with a promised escort to Geneva in the distance, would have formed no bad commencement to greater opportunities."

"Simply comprehended, indeed, my friend! Oh that I could teach you wisdom in the ways of women! Believe me, while I speak it in all seriousness, this Madeline Schvolen, for such she tells me is her name, has to her share no small power of mind. I can in part excuse your not discovering it, as you had not all the advantages that I had in hearing her tell her own story, and draw her own conclusions."

"But holding that she be a very Madame Dacier in learning, or no less than a Queen Elizabeth of England in power, still, where was the reason for our turning our backs when she offered us so fair-faced an opportunity of improving our acquaintance?"

"Positively, Altoz, you get beyond endurance. Have I not told her that you can conduct her to Madame Lalande? Have I not promised to be in attendance at the *Coq d'Or* by noon to-morrow, to introduce her to that particular acquaintance of yours? Think you then, that with these tasks on my hands, I had any time to stay and sup, when there is yet a Madame Lalande to be found, and a thousand instructions to be given before to-morrow noon, in order to set matters in a right train for the maiden's reception?"

"Cry you mercy," said the chevalier, "I do begin to see wisdom in our departure."

"Prodigious! Have I already enlightened you so far? Then, prithee, good chevalier, make bold, as I do, to tread lightly along this passage, and

to horse, before those boisterous messmen of an idle hour, who are now doubtless under Maravelli's tuition, drinking ill success to our supper, get a hint that we have given them the slip."

"But, think ye, they will not resent our unceremonious absence, and, by some unlucky disclosure, mar the plot which already promises to be worthy of even your plotful genius?"

"Well bethought," replied De Mara; "I will pass a word to Maravelli, which shall prevent so ill-omened a change in my worship of Cupid and his freakful mother. It is only giving the Italian a supposed triumph over me for the time. And now, chevalier, lightly—lightly by this turning, and without a breath. To have them upon me in their present hurly-burly mood would be death to all my projects."

Altoz did as he was requested, and in a few minutes the pair found themselves in front of the inn; the horses were out in a minute, and De Mara, having handed a pencil note to the ostler to be delivered to Maravelli in explanation of his departure, vaulted into his saddle in a twinkling, and, accompanied by Altoz, galloped off for Geneva.

Long time they pursued their hurried pace without a word falling from either. Indeed, the rapidity with which they pushed for the city pretty nearly precluded them from conversation. At length, Altoz, willing to know something further of his leader's intentions, called out to him that he believed his horse had picked up a stone, and that he must stop to ease him of the incumbrance.

"Not for a moment, dear Altoz!" said the count; "for once, for my sake, let him hold his pace even at a discomfort. Each moment grows more precious as I lose it; we are already far into the night, and my task, as I survey it, grows larger and larger."

And with this, clapping spurs afresh to his horse, on he bounded with increased velocity, as though struggling to exceed the pace of the very car of night.

Altoz, not so full heated with the project that moved them forward at so fearful a rate as his companion, could not but observe the sort of road along which they held their course; bold-browed rocks and deep-mouthed precipices were upon them on every side; and, as they came to each winding in the road, it seemed to him as if De Mara, who was precursor in their swift career, had devoted himself, like a second Martius Curtius, to the yawning of the gulf before him, and was ready on the instant to perform his vow. Both the riders, however, were admirable horsemen; and with little more than a glance at the strange cracks which past ages had made in Nature's bosom, they rode vehemently yet warily onward, now under the deep shade of some superimminent crag, and anon emerging thence into the full moonshine, given over and over again from the surface of a dozen petty streams and tiny lakes that crossed their path—till at length they reached the stream and lake, indeed, where the great and noisy Rhone rushes in double channel from the huge expanse of water that ever supplies its course, and where that same expanse, spreading on every side, with waves for its surface, and mountains for its crowning, looks like some vast immeasurable inland sea pent up and beating its patient shores for egress and permission to devastate the southern champaign with its roll of waters.

Geneva was gained. Then, and not till then, De Mara saw fit to slacken his pace; and, in a few minutes, Altoz, who had been getting more and more into the back ground during the latter part of the gallop against time, was by his side.

"That may be called a very tolerable moonlight ride," said the count, as soon as the chevalier joined him; "and, had it been performed in England, the newspapers there would have rung of the feat for a week, with a daily bulletin of the health of our horses after their exertion."

"It is just as well for you," said the chevalier, "that the newspapers should not ring with the feat; for, when it is known that men have ridden five-and-twenty miles at the rate we have to-night, and over such prettily broken ground too, they are apt to inquire for the motive that induced such an undertaking."

"Any one may know my motive," cried the count, with a laugh; "for it was simply this—my extreme anxiety to pay my earliest respects to Madame Deboos."

"Deboos!" cried Altoz; "Oh the hag!—Give you good night, my noble count; you shall not get me to go an inch nearer her dwelling. I thought this last turning we made had evil in it, for Guzman stumbled as I reined him round. When a horse, that has borne me so truly over such places as I have seen to-night, comes to a stumble in a smooth street, I might have guessed that there was mischief brewing. I would sooner face Hecate, with a thousand minor witches in her train, than that infernal Deboos. I never cross her path but I think she smells sulphureous, savouring to a degree of what Virgil would attribute to Avernus."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the count; "these midnight rambles agree with my chevalier; for he has become superstitious and poetical both in a breath. We shall make something of you yet, Altoz!"

"Any thing you will," replied Altoz, "save and except a disciple of Deboos. I forswore her for ever yesterday was a week."

"Oh, if you have dates and oaths to quote, I must rescind. But, be of good courage: my friend Deboos is but a woman after all; and I thought the Chevalier Altoz was too valorous to shrink from any of the kind. Tell me your cause of quarrel at least?"

"How can you ask it? It lies on the surface, and is evident to all that have once been in her company. It lies on the surface, count."

"Nay," said De Mara, "if you are quarrelling with an old woman's complexion, there is nothing to be said."

"Psha!" replied Altoz, pettishly, "who spoke of her complexion? There is such a thing as the surface of the mind as well as the surface of the body. What! is it my turn to become instructor to the all-wise, Count de Mara?"

"No—no," cried the count, "only interpreter of your own meanings. But now that you have mentioned the matter of grievance, I will venture a wager—and, as I have lost one to-day, I shall take care to do nothing rash in that way—but I will venture a trifle that I can lay my finger on the flaw in her mind's complexion (if that must be the phrase) with which you have fallen out."

"Let me hear. You shall have a candid confirmation if you have lighted on the true source."

"It is, then, her wisdom which has made these odds between you."

"Humph!" said Altoz; "perhaps—peradventure—and so on."

"Which 'so on,'" cried the Count, "means certainly, and out of doubt. I knew it, and will tell you why;—simply, because I have been acquainted with you both full time enough to discover your contrarieties of character. If Deboos is not allowed to think that she is the very pilot of all the ocean she is called upon to sail in, she becomes as unmanageable as a young horse the first day he is committed to the breaker's care, and will not be ruled by aye or nay."

"You have hit it in part," said Altoz, "but forgot to sum up the conclusion, which is, that in shunning Scylla, you get upon Charybdis; for, though to avoid her guidance is a quarrel prepense, to yield to it is ruin foreordained."

"But," replied the count, "there is a happy medium still left to him who can truly play the game of life, and handle the sinuosities of disposition with that niceness of touch which shows the master. Deboos would be pilot.

Have with her! But in your manœuvres be sure that she is only the rudder —the apparent instrument of what takes place, but in reality nothing but the passive result of the skilful helmsman's movements. See, Altoz, my lecture has brought me to her door. Pluck up your courage, man, and in with me, that I may practically illustrate what I flatter myself I have not mal-adroitly laid down in principle."

"To give my commander-in-chief," said Altoz, with a shrug, "so fair an opportunity of illustrating his principles, I will for once make a sacrifice of mine. Believe me, De Mara, it is no small effort for me to consent once again to face that domineering devil in petticoats, and I therefore pray you to observe I attend only as a listener—to con a lesson, if you will have it so. Not a word shall escape my lips, for, if I once encourage her attack, I shall gain nothing but a bout at scolding, and you still less, for it may go near to spoil the purpose for which you are here."

"Wisely resolved, my prince of laconics," cried the count; "and lest so excellent a determination should evaporate, I will make the door my tell-tale, and see how much beating it takes to rouse a women at two in the morniug."

It was some time, however, before there appeared any likelihood of either the one or the other obtaining ingress; and while the count was impatiently engaged knocking at the door, Altoz, who had no such eagerness for admittance, stood laughing at the hurried exclamations with which his friend accompanied each repetition of the stroke.

"Bravo, count, bravo!" cried he, after a more noisy performance of the nobleman than ever: "bravo!—if this were but the poet's street of Geneva, that last attack would have roused one of the tribe from his bed to discharge his genius in a smile, in which you would have figured as Jove the Thunderer. What! another peal! Was not the former hint loud enough to justify a minute's pause? Would that you were cloud-compelling Jove as well as Jove the Thunderer, that yon bright moon might be hid, and her light a little dimmed; for, if my eyes do not deceive me, I see more than one head peeping at us through neighbour windows. Besides, if a stray passenger should be drawn this way by the knocking, there is light enough to show our plight, which, with the dust of five-and-twenty long miles on our dress, is none of the most splendid."

"Do, for the love of success," cried the count, "cease that wonderful flow of wit for a few minutes. I think I hear some one stirring within; so that it be a human being, I care not who or what."

"There you are wrong, my friend. If that be not Deboos herself, the chances are that you get no admission; for she will discover that it was wrong in any one to rise at such an hour without her specific orders, and so deny the opening of the door; and, if it be Deboos, why then the chances still are that you get no admission, for she will discover that such a knocking at such an hour was essentially improper, and not to be countenanced by suffering him that knocked to gain the object for which he knocked."

"Most admirable logician! Oh that nature should have made such a one a chevalier instead of an advocate! But I was right: I hear a renewed movement within. A confirmatory knock may chance to quicken their pace." And again the count, in his impatience, made the door resound.

Before he had arrived at the end of this concluding peal, the door flew open, and Madame Deboos herself appeared in the opening. The figure that she presented was not a little extraordinary, and, often as the Chevalier Altoz had seen her, he could not forbear shrinking by an involuntary motion of his body, as it were, from the station which he occupied, when he first cast his eyes upon her. Madame Deboos was a woman that had probably never been handsome in her best days, further than expression

can make the human countenance so; and now that time had marked her line by line, till the deep and expressive furrows of her face were striking and perspicuous, any thing that came under the idea of beauty was of course out of the question; but she still was what she had ever been—a most commanding creature, something within human nature indeed, but far beyond what we understand as definitely applicable to feminine human nature. Her stature was towering and lofty, but at the same time fully borne out by her general proportions and the perfect carriage which she applied to her conditions. The whole head was such a one as Michael Angelo might have invented in his boldest moments, when his whole soul was on fire to produce something overpowering and out of all comparison. But the prodigy above all of the whole countenance was the eye; full, large, and magnificently shaded with nature's fringe, she could, when she pleased, subdue its gaze, and soften it even to soothingness; but when she was roused—when her soul was excited to put on its armour, and launch its dart through that medium which has been so finely designated "the soul's window," then it was that the power of her eye was felt and acknowledged; then it was that it sent forth its invisible but heartfelt messengers, ranging and ranging till it swept into its own circle of influence the whole faculties of those it encountered. It was this power, still more than her words—and they wanted neither refinement nor searchingness—that had excited more awe in the mind of Altoz than he chose to confess, and which had not passed De Mara by unfelt, though he was too much in love with himself ever to admit, even to his own most inward thoughts, that aught in the shape of woman could excite an emotion in his bosom to which he was unwilling to give harbourage.

But though one of these two extremes made up her general appearance, this night her countenance had an aspect with which those most accustomed to her looks were unacquainted. Her countenance, which usually had something of the hectic in it, and which, when excited, became even florid, was now deadly pale. It was as though the hand of death had traversed her face, and left its pallid mark behind. The whole of her limbs were affected by a slight palsy; and even her voice partook of the emotion, and evinced a tremor never before its wont, as she exclaimed, "I thought so. None short of De Mara could have ventured on such a disturbance at an hour when weak hearts and prudent heads deem it wiser to keep the custom of the world and sleep away their cares. But you are welcome, my friend; and for the sake of this visit, I can even tolerate Altoz's impertinences, of which I had hoped I had heard and seen the last."

"It is a choice meeting on both sides, then, Deboos," said the count, "for, be sure, I am otherwise too much in love with the decencies, to intrude at such an hour;" and as he spoke this he gave it emphasis with such a sneer as men seldom indulge in, till they feel confident of the ground upon which they stand, and the persons by whom their motions are surveyed.

"Make it choicer," said the female, "by sending away that loiterer; and we will to business on the instant."

"That cannot well be," replied the count, "for as my present errand in part includes the chevalier's services, I must entreat your patience both for my story and his presence."

The count then, as briefly as the facts would permit, related his adventures with Madeline, and repeated the story which she had given to him in explanation of the motives which had induced her and Albert to quit Unwalden for Geneva.

"And now," continued he, "that you have heard all the circumstances of the affair, you may easily guess my motive in coming here. I have the honour to salute Madame Lalande."

"Thank Heaven, count," said the newly-christened lady, "that the task you have imposed is an easy one; for whatever its amount might have been, I was in no condition to refuse, as you will presently hear. But as my business, unlike yours, does not require the services of the chevalier, perhaps I may now be allowed to reduce the dialogue to a *tête-à-tête?*"

Altoz understood the hint, and, true to his text, without uttering a word, withdrew.

"And now, Lalande-Deboos, or Deboos-Lalande," cried the count, "how is it that I am to balance the account?"

"Shortly thus, count; you must let me have three hundred louis-d'ors before noon; for without that I shall be neither in temper nor condition to play this new Lalande's part, which at best has been given me at short notice, and which ought to have some consideration."

"On that head," replied the count, "I have no fears. My Deboos has her wits too much about her to miss in so small an undertaking: besides, all my hints on the subject are contained in this one—Remember, the girl has sense. But, then, three hundred louis-d'ors! Positively, the sum is beyond a joke."

"Very likely; but not a whit the less certain that I must have them. If I had not been the most reasonable of women, I should have asked for four, for the three hundred must be paid away by noon."

"Paid away! That is a new feature in your character," cried the count; "I never before knew you to be in such a hurry to pay money, as to dispose of it before you had it. Suppose we make the three hundred payable when Madeline has adopted you?"

"Then she never will adopt me," exclaimed Deboos, passionately; "for I stir neither hand nor foot in the business till the louis-d'ors are paid. Come, come, count, you and I have been too long acquainted to need ceremony now; and you know me well enough to understand, that when I have said the money must be forthcoming, it is in vain to hope to shake me."

"Well, but at least let me have the satisfaction of knowing how my money is to be spent."

"Ask it not," cried Deboos with a shudder:—"would I knew not myself. A claim has been made on me this night, which I have not power to resist. Long I fought, boldly I contested, but the monster was too much for me: his hold was too griping and irresistible; and I have not only promised, but must perform my promise."

"Well, well," cried De Mara; "the money shall be ready for you if you will come to my hotel by ten this morning. But you are a strange unaccountable creature. I thought when we entered, something extraordinary must have passed to have excited you to such a degree."

"No, no! nothing had happened. Never heed the matter. 'Tis but the remains of last night's fever, and by noon I shall again be myself to receive your visiter. At ten, you said, the money should be ready."

"At ten: till then, adieu! I must seek an hour's repose to brace me for the coming day, which promises to be a busy one. Good repose Deboos!"

And with this the count withdrew to the street, where he found Altoz ready mounted and waiting for his arrival.

"Good repose! said he;" cried the female whom he had just quitted:—"that must be by and by, when the cold earth and I lie cheek to cheek. Till then, thorns for my pillow, and spiked boards for my resting-place: unless, indeed———ah, that was well thought of. It shall be tried."

And, as if under the impulse of some sudden and unprepared emotion, she passed quickly to the back of the premises, where a sort of out-house was erected, which appeared to be filled with all kinds of lumber and ill-assorted stores.

"Urfort, Urfort," cried she, "come forth, thou creature of shade and night."

A man, stunted and thickset in his appearance, and whose somewhat grizzled locks bespoke the passage of some fifty winters over them, made his appearance at her bidding. The contrast between the two was extraordinary. She of a towering height and figure—he stunted and ill grown—made but an ill-matched pair. But look in their faces, and the comparison was still more distinct. She, in her worst moments, had a deep-seated, intellectual expression spread over her countenance, which gave token of what the creature might have been, had not ill passions and swerving temper been predominant. But seek for soul in the lineaments of his face, and how vain the search! His best expression was reckless jollity, which, as the passions moved him, retrograded rapidly, but surely, to staring audacity, malicious cunning, and fixed brutality.

As soon as he stood before her—"Urfort," said she, "let us parley no further. The three hundred louis you ask for shall be yours on one condition."

"One condition!" cried Urfort: "you shall make three hundred conditions if you please—or three thousand—or three millions. I love conditions;—they sound so diplomatic and statesman-like. It always makes me think that I am at last quitting the poor rogue to become the rich one."

"Peace, peace, man! and listen to my proposal. The three hundred louis shall be yours."

"Aye; you said that before: but never mind—I can bear the repetition of such a sentiment—or rather fact—(pray, let me mind my grammar) a score of times."

"Yours on condition that never again you cross my path:—never, while life holds us, see me, speak to me, or write to me! What say you?"

"I say—of course! Why, what now, Goody?—Our days of love are long since passed. Why, then, should I say, 'Aye' when you say 'Nay?' Did you fear that part of the gold would be spent in a serenade under your window? That might have done when we were in sunny Italy, and all our raptures young; but now neither the climate of heaven nor of our feelings suits such pulling crotchets."

"Oh, Urfort, speak not of Italy."

"What, out of conceit with poor Italy too, as well as with me? Why, we had jovial hours there, child. Do you remember the gardens of Paulini, where we were all laughter? Do you remember the woods of Arva, where we were all love? Do you remember the casino of your uncle—*requiescat in pace*—where—"

"Monster, villian! dare you name him? Dare you remind me of that deed of blood, and wickedness?"

"Well, well, let it pass then! not but what it was a good argument when you refused the three hundred louis. Apropos, how am I to receive the same?"

"You have not yet sworn never again to see me."

"What, must I swear? Now, what silly work is this! Not but what I'll swear if you insist. What shall I swear by?—yourself, your uncle, or your three hundred louis? Psha, woman! can you really want an oath from me?"

"You say truly, Urfort. I will ask none; for, if you feel disposed to break it, it would be no bond; and I should, therefore, only be unnecessarily adding another sin to your list, already too long."

"Many thanks, mother Confessor," cried Urfort; "had I time I would officiate as father in the same line; and we would give each other mutual absolution. As it is, adieu! Leave the money beneath the filbert-tree in the garden, and do not fear my ever troubling you again."

CHAPTER IX.

Forsake the pleasure to pursue the vice.
LORD ROCHESTER.

Nay, but we'll admit no pause.
HEYWOOD'S CHALLENGE FOR BEAUTY.

WHEN the Count De Mara returned to his hotel, after his interview with Madame Deboos, he again and again conned over the features of his design upon Madeline, to be quite sure that the engines which he intended to bring to bear upon his scheme were not only proper in themselves, but likely to work in a proper way towards the end which he had in view. He was like some deep-scheming general on the eve of a great battle, that was expected to make all or to mar all—all its faculties alive—and all his attention applied with the soul of energy to the various points of attack that were likely to present themselves. De Mara, who was a quick and accurate diver into the depths of human nature, felt well persuaded that the labour he had now entered upon was one that would require all his skill—for what Madeline wanted in knowledge of the world, she more than made up in rapidity of perception and in soundness of judgment: her mind seemed ever to be on the alert, and nothing crossed her without being weighed, balanced, and an opinion formed upon its good and evil proportions. The count, who during his residence at Geneva, had been in vain on the search for a conquest worthy of his arts, was delighted at having at length found one whom he deemed every way sufficiently tempting to command his pains. The beauty of the maiden, which had first struck his admiring eyes, was almost forgotten, or at least had passed considerably to the back-ground, as he listened to her silver tones; and even now, when alone, his chief thoughts were directed towards the mental qualifications which she had displayed; and if he ever reverted to her beauty, it was only for the sake of remembering how admirably its character harmonized with her power of mind and tone of conversation.

It was in the midst of these considerations that he passed the first hour after he arrived at his hotel, and then remembering that it might be as well to embrace the opportunity which the time afforded of obtaining a few hours' rest, he threw himself on his couch in the hope of enjoying so much sleep. But his mind was in too active a state to allow the body that repose which it required; for even when he dozed, the disturbed starts which he underwent, and the broken sentences which he murmured through the mazes of his half-waking dreams, indicated that the veil which Somnus had thrown around him was of the frailest texture, with too little of oblivion (sleep's prime ingredient) in it to allow his senses to withdraw from their present "be all."

At length the morning came, and gave him signal to arise. Impetuous, eager, and full of urgent blood, he stepped from his couch; and though he could hardly be said to have been restored by the doubtful rest he had procured, his spirit was as though his whole frame was in its freshest condition, and fatigue and he were little known to one another. He had not, however, got rid of the hurry of his manner. Expectation had taken possession of his soul; and he seemed only fit to count the hours, whose death promised to bring him life.

There are two sorts of love. One—pure, exquisite, and lovely; founded on affection for a single and invaluable object, and resting its whole hope on that object's happiness: the other is single and insidious, built only on

self-gratification and the desire of indulging at all hazards an unsharing principle. But both the one and the other—the good and the bad—summon ardour to their aid; and, as Sylla to serve himself could be as daring, bold and resolute as Regulus to serve his country, so the selfish lover is just as able to be hot in pursuit and eager in attack; nay, even more so than he who still has tenderness for his beloved to check his transport, and an honest doubt of his own worthiness to possess this goddess-supposed to subdue his passion's inebriety.

Altoz and Deboos were with their principal by ten o'clock, and again the whole bearings of the affair were commented on by the count. So anxious did he seem that every possible point should have its consideration, that probably he would have gone on with his instructions till Madeline arrived had not Deboos, who dreaded the effects of an *éclaircissement* with Urfort, reminded him of the money which he had engaged to provide.

"True, true," said the count, the greatest general must pay his way till he is able to forage on the enemy's land. And, therefore, I have prepared myself for your demand as far as the urgency of the case would permit. Here are two hundred and fifty louis, all I happen to have in my escritoire at this moment, and Altoz must lend me the difference for a day or two, till I have time to make my letters of credit available."

"Lend you the difference!" cried Altoz; "hark-ye, count, fifty louis on five hundred are heartily at your service; but it would go against my conscience to advance even five for such a purpose as this."

De Mara perceived that the lady was going to reply in no very tender strain, and he interposed. "Never mind your conscience," cried he; "or strain it for once to oblige a friend. I pledge you my word to show you reasons anon why the thing is advisable, and even to my profit."

"Well, well, said Altoz; if you put it upon your wisdom, I suppose the pupil must yield to his master; but, for a profitable bargain, it has as Jewish a look, as if the whole were taken up on bond of Israel Solomons at his risk-rate of interest."

Deboos, having obtained the full amount, was in too great a hurry to be gone to be able to spare time for any remarks; and after she was again warned by the count to be in attendance at twelve to receive Madeline, she was suffered to depart.

"Now, dear count, in the name of every wisdom at once, I entreat you to explain; for, were the reward of being made grand professor of logic to three German Universities staring me in the face, I could not for the soul of me invent so much as a half sentence to be spoken in favour of paying three hundred louis beforehand to this cousin of Lucifer, even before it is known whether she will execute three hundred sous of service in the whole business."

"I will answer your question," said the count, "in the first instance by asking another. Do you remember why last night you advised me to have nothing to do with Deboos?"

"To be sure I do; a deep cut is not so easily healed as to prevent the smart being felt after the lapse of so short a time."

"Then I may tell you, by way of soothing the smart, that the full force of your objection was felt even by me. But there were reasons to weigh against it. The notice at which our newly-made Madame Lalande's part was to be played was so short, that it was absolutely necessary to confide it to a woman of talent; and Deboos was the only one at hand sufficiently trustworthy in that respect. Had I been in dear Paris, indeed, I might have had the choice of a hundred or two—all of them Debooses, or better. But here the spirit of Calvin, when the stiff-backed fellow died, seems to have taken up with the women of the place, and, on its coming in, out went the genius of intrigue."

"But still why was Deboos to have three hundred louis for doing nothing?"

"Bless me! what a quantity of matter-of-fact talking you require before your brain can conceive a position! In the first place, she absolutely refused to work without cash in advance: in the second place, humouring her in this has made her what your groom would call 'tender in the mouth,' and turned an animal whom you might well describe to be intractable as a mule into something reasonable and manageable: and in the third place—I like to come to your thirds, it looks so categorical and argument-like—in the third place, this loan puts this wayward woman somewhat in my power, and if I can but bring her also to that opinion, the chances are that I shall be able to guide her tolerably safely, till we come to the crisis, and there I want none to help me."

"One—two—three; finely concluded indeed! It was worth the fifty louis to hear the general explain his motives."

"Shall we cry quits then?" said the count, with a laugh; "they will go nigh to help me through my losings to Maravelli yesterday."

"That was not so well concluded, speaking *quoad* myself; and the footing you put it upon makes it still worse, for it reminds me that to suit your purpose I lost a supper—a loss not to be held lightly, when accompanied with the presidency of the fiftieth queen of the constant Count de Mara's heart."

"The fiftieth she may be—but at all events the dearest."

"Of course," replied the chevalier, drily—"because the last. I never could understand, count, what made you such a desperado at the Change."

"My mother, dear Altoz—simply, my mother. She taught me early in life to make her my confidante. As long as my secrets went no further than a truant holiday or a school-time robbery, the system worked well enough: I gave her my confidence, which she returned with her protection, and we both thought ourselves gainers; but when young master sprang up towards manhood, the case wore its complexion 'with a difference.' It was some time before I found out the change, and that meanwhile was sufficient to fix my feelings as to women. The first of those dear decoyers of man's idle hours that I fell in love with was a pretty brunette, whose mother was in the habit of visiting at our chateau. As soon as I had ascertained the fact myself, my mother had the full particulars from me. 'My dear boy,' quoth she, 'you must avoid her. To love, in the abstract, I have no objection, but to Mademoiselle Mignelle there are insuperable objections: she has no temper, and her thoughts are all on a pigmy scale.' Either, at that time, I was the most obedient of sons, or my mother's manner had extraordinary influence over me, for Mademoiselle Mignelle la Brunette was given up, and I lost my heart three days afterwards to a blonde. But here there was another insuperable objection again on the mother's side; and so it would have probably been *ad infinitum*, for as fast as I fell in love, my mother conjured errors 'from the vasty deep.'"

"But still this must have been soon at an end," said Altoz, "for I have always heard you say that you lost your mother before you had reached manhood."

"That is true; she died just as I was falling in love for the thirteenth time. But young minds both easily and forcibly receive impressions; and mine was indelibly stamped with the imperfectibility of women. My mother—a wise woman by the way—with all her zeal for the sex, found more faults than virtues in each, as they passed in survey across my mirror of love; and the consequence was, a young but earnest resolution on my part to handle the sex as wise men handle straws;—used lightly, and with a judicious hand, they tickle and are pleasing; but thrust them incautiously

into the eye or ear—give them a place within, and they irritate instead of tickling—they inflict pain, instead of pleasure."

The conversation was here interrupted by the re-entry of Deboos, who, true to her appointment, made her appearance as the clock struck twelve, with her dress somewhat altered; or, to use her own expression, "her external style subdued so as best to soothe the daughter of Madame Lalande's friend."

The count walked round her in the same disposition of mind in which Sir Giles Overreach surveyed his daughter; and as Margaret's gown did not affect the usurious knight, so De Mara fell out with the cap of his female coadjutor.

"Ye gods, what a cap, Deboos!" cried he; "is it borrowed from the model of the ancient Persian fire-worshippers, or a modern Spanish auto-da-fé. Is this what you mean by 'subdued?' On the faith of a gentleman, I never saw the same idea similarly expressed."

"Count de Mara," said the lady, somewhat offended, "I beg that the judgment of my own affairs may be left to myself. Surely you have nothing to do with my particular head-dress."

"There you are mistaken," replied the other; "it is part and parcel of our treaty of alliance that all matters were to be in accordance for the peaceable reception of Madeline."

"True," cried Altoz; "and I am sure there can be little hope of peace under such inflammatory colours. No garrison would dream of surrendering at discretion while they were exhibited."

"Well sung in concert, Mr. Duplicate," exclaimed Deboos, in a contemptuous tone;—"thou poor copy of no very wonderful original, be wise and leave the matter to your master, for your interference does but mar the little that is to be said in his behalf."

"But, in sober earnest, Deboos," said the count, "the cap must be altered. Our expected visiter apprehends, from all that she has heard of Madame Lalande, that she is as staid and puritanical in her every thing as a devotee in the last stage of self-contradiction."

"Is this generous, Count De Mara—is it just? But I understand the meaning of the scene: you think that because my wants have put me in your power, you may venture this paltry *jeu d'esprit* to tickle the chevalier's silliness, and thus bribe his vanity as you have my poverty."

"Absurd—absurd!" replied the count; "but this is ever the way with you very clever women; you are so deep, so profound, so searching, that if a reason lies too near the surface, it is sure to be overlooked for the purpose of fishing up from the depths some fine-drawn motive, that is generally no motive at all. The simple fact is, that the cap is too gay for the taste of a Swiss village girl; and those who are prudent will consider all things when they have a point at heart to carry."

"Well, count," said the lady, "I do not wish to commence this undertaking in ill blood, and I will therefore yield the point. But I beg that it may be understood that in future my part of the task is to be left entirely to my own control. French counts, of course, may be very clever, but it is woman's privilege to read women; and, if my services are to be employed, it must be on the condition that I am to judge for myself." And with this she withdrew to make the necessary change in her dress, on the understanding that she was to meet the two gentlemen as soon as possible at the *Coq d'Or*, whither they were to proceed in expectation of Madeline's arrival.

On their road thither Altoz thought that there was enough of triumph on his side to justify his referring to the ridiculous ebullition that had just taken place, and he therefore opened the attack by observing—"Three hundred louis most wisely spent! Now a common lover, such as I, might have deemed it more judicious to expend the gold in some pretty bauble for the

admired; but live and learn—live and learn; and I must indeed be under the tuition of a superior tactician, when I cannot even understand his very first *ruse*."

"What!" cried De Mara, "rebelling again so soon! Have a care, or my young volunteer will be cashiered at least—to say nothing of a court-martial."

"I have heard that that is a favourite move of some generals, when they find their subalterns more deep-sighted than themselves."

"Why, what a piece of impatience art thou! How durst thou pass thyself off to me as a sober Spaniard, when double-heated Welch blood shows itself in every second movement of your actions. Answer me this, thou modern Fluellen! did you ever hear Deboos so moderate before in her declamations?"

"Oh, tut, tut," cried the chevalier, "that pass wont serve. You foretold entire submission throughout; and now before three hours have elapsed, content yourself with something Deboos would call 'subdued, &c.'"

"I content myself, because I have obtained all I expected. When a conqueror proposes to Christianize a nation of savages, he does not expect to make Popes, or Luthers, or Calvins of them all. All these things are to be taken relatively, and in reference to what their former state was. Do you suppose for a moment, that if Deboos had not had my three hundred louis—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the chevalier with a shrug, "your two hundred and fifty louis!"

"Well, well, as you please," continued the other; "but if the money had not been paid to her, and she in bond, do you think any argument in the world would have persuaded her to change that cap, which looked as if it had been dipped in Phlegethon, and set a-blaze by Phaeton?"

"All which plainly goes to show that you have made a dangerous bargain. Rely on it, she will play you some knave's trick before your game is over—perhaps even overturn the whole machine!"

"Thank you, thank you, Sir Raven of the Croaking Throat!" cried the count, "but trust me, I shall have a quick eye upon her, with a hand prepared to minister against all such evil."

And with this they found themselves arrived at the *Coq d'Or*. The count's servant had been sent early in the morning to bespeak apartments for the expected strangers, and therefore De Mara, after casting an eye over the appointed apartments, had nothing to do but to sit down and wait quietly till his intended victim should arrive.

The nobleman and his party did not arrive at the *Coq d'Or* till past the time at which Madeline was expected. The count, however, was too old a traveller not to know that postillions will be unpunctual, ladies unready, and post-horses unwilling; and he therefore was not much surprised at an hour or two slipping away without his expected visiters making their appearance: but in proportion as still further time passed on with the same lack of profit, his impatience grew to a head; and when he found four o'clock—five o'clock—six o'clock—arrive, without producing Madeline and her brother, the irritation of his mind became perceptible in his manner, though the cause remained unconfessed. The conversation, in which he forced himself to join, lost its interest, and more and more frequently, as the hour advanced, it became broken and unattended to: his watch was continually in his hand, and he seemed at those moments to devote the whole powers of his mind to the movement of the hands of the machine, as though by the mere act of intense watching he would convert each minute into an hour, and, by keeping up a constant observation on the motions of the enemy, prevent the rapidity of his flight. When not thus employed, and as his uneasiness grew upon him, he would start from his seat,

and tramp the floor at a rate almost swift enough to induce the belief that he was giving an example of the force at which he would have Madeline travel: hurried exclamations, in themselves nothing, but highly indicative of the sensations that were predominant in his mind, broke from him involuntarily; and ever as he paced the room, he would make a sudden halt before the window, and cast a longing eye at the road by which his expected was to arrive. But the sound of a carriage almost shook him with expectation, and his whole frame assumed an attitude of intense attention to the interruption. Each carriage was the one for which he looked: each, as it approached, was expected to stop at the gate; and if but the look of the driver was directed towards the hotel, the count's pulse bounded in strange and anxious vibration, till the horses' heads got beyond the entrance; and then all went back again with a rapid, painful, and sickening reaction.

It is the prerogative, or rather the curse, of those who are the creatures of passion, and depend upon impulse for their direction, to be governed by the suddenness of their feelings; and in proportion as their energies have been worked up to a particular expectation, do they feel the magnitude of the impression. It matters not whether the object is a world or an atom: having begun upon it, whatever it may be, the passion feeds itself, and from its own power of nourishment becomes gigantic:—heart, blood, mind and soul seem all involved in the general rush, and, like the frog in the fable, they swell and distend beyond the powers of endurance. The slightest check is felt, as if it were the imposition of some huge mountain; and the disappointment of no more than a little minute comes ramping and raging on the perturbed and overstretched spirit with a sensation that beats back the previous uprising to a degree as insupportable as it is irresistible.

It was thus that De Mara was moved; and in proportion as his sensations grew stronger and stronger, the more visible they became to his companions. At length they reached a height that became quite alarming. He seemed to have no control over himself. He could not bear to rest for a moment—but, without ceasing, stalked up and down the room, changing his pace as the picture graven on the camera obscura of his mind changed. It was the reign of passion—the anarchy of reason!

"What shall we do with him?" whispered Altoz to Deboos, for this was a situation in which the unadmitted confession of his mind impelled him to apply to the stronger judgment.

"He must be made to talk," answered Deboos in the same low tone; "words to men are what tears are to women; bring it to that, and you have opened one of Nature's own sluices, by which she intends these hot-headed spirits to be cooled."

"Make him talk!" cried the chevalier; "that is easily said; but an hour ago I exhausted all my talking subjects, and he may think it somewhat dull and prosy to go the same matter over again."

"That was profoundly spoken," said the female, with a sneer: "would to Heaven you always knew how to appreciate your own powers with equal justice! For once take a lesson from me; and, instead of prating to him on subjects which must be as so many blanks to him in his present state of mind, attack him on the one single point that wraps him."

"To my mind," replied the chevalier with a shake of his head, "that will be only throwing oil to the flames."

"Add to my prescription a style that shall alarm his self-love and vanity, and you will see that the medicine will work to its true intent."

"Excuse me," replied Altoz, "as you undertake the office of physician, I think that it rests with you to administer your own recipe."

"With all my heart," cried Deboos. "Pray," added she, raising her

voice so as to attract the count's attention:—"pray, can you tell me how I may meet with the Count De Mara?"

The count desisted from his rapid traverse of the room, and stood before her. "Madam," said he, hardly knowing at what she was aiming, but determined to outvie the calm dignity of her manner;—"Madam, the Count de Mara has the honour of standing before you!"

"You, the count?" cried Deboos, with an affected start of surprise:—"Oh, impossible! I have even heard that the Count de Mara prided himself on the coolness of his judgment and the imperturbability of his manner. Besides, I know from pretty good authority, that he is in expectation of meeting a chit in whom he pretends to be deeply interested. Sir, if you were the count, under such circumstances, you would be as sober as an Arcadian, and as much under the commnnd of self as a grenadier is of his officer."

"The hint is well thrown in, Deboos," said the count; "and I am obliged accordingly; but it appears to me that I am in perfect order."

"Rather say in most admired disorder," cried the other: "half a dozen hours ago you were preaching to us the necessity of having all our wits about us, as your Madeline was a bird not to be netted by unwary fowlers."

"And I still hold to the same," said De Mara: "who says to the contrary?"

"The Count de Mara himself! The essence of unwariness is produced by want of self-command."

"Ah," cried the count, as if in consciousness of the justice of her censure; and then recovering himself, "but who wants self-command?—as for me I am as steady as a ten-year-old pilot."

"And yet he were a rash man who, having seen your last hour's course, would insure you from either shoals or breakers."

"Indeed!" cried the count, his self-love somewhat nettled;—"why, here is the chevalier who would do it for a farthing."

"Not I, in good sooth!" cried Altoz: "after this day's experience I intend always to be wise, and never to be rash."

"A most important vow," said Deboos; "I pray Heaven grant you strength to keep it for a day."

"Hark!" cried the count; "I hear a chaise. Yes—yes!—Now, a thousand curses light upon it—it stops not here. By Heaven, I am in that mind that I would have every villain guillotined that dares drive a chaise down the street till *my* one, which I almost think will never come, arrives."

"Coolness personified!" ejaculated the chevalier.

"Patience is the highest perfection," responded Deboos.

"In humble parody of Æsop's fox," cried the count, "I may exclaim—what pity 'tis, that two such well-shaped heads should hold so little brains! Of what is it you are complaining? That being in love, I am out of patience. Well, where is the wonder? What the marvel?"

"Both wonder and marvel enough, I think," said Deboos, "when the philosophical De Mara shows such symptoms."

"Wrong again," exclaimed the count; "it is because I am philosophical that I act thus. Think you that there is no such thing as the philosophy of love?"

"Most assuredly there is, and has been ever since the days of Plato."

"And in what does the philosophy of love consist?" continued De Mara. "Of what but impatient anxiety, fierce desire, uncontrollable palpitation! Even as the philosophy of science is abstruse, the philosophy of modesty demure, and the philosophy of gambling calculating, so the philosophy of love is ardent and overwhelming."

"Mere periods and phrases!" answered the lady; "the philosophy of

every thing is that which enables the possessor to survey accurately, and comprehend justly the nature of the subject."

"A thousand thanks, Deboos!—you have pronounced my argument to heir. One such speech from the chevalier, and I shall have to congratula myself on having enrolled you both on my side of the question."

"I shall say nothing," cried the chevalier; "but I follow the maxi doled out to me when I was at school—Hear, see, and say nothing."

"Then hear this, my friend," said the count, "and place it in the wise corner of your mind. Deboos tells us that to taste the philosophy of a ma ter, we must comprehend it justly. Now let me be told this!—How a we to comprehend the depths of a forest by keeping ever on its skirts? or the fastnesses of a castle by walking round the moat? 'Forward! fo ward!' must be our motto:—we must force ourselves through the brus wood in the one case, or wind through the cunning labyrinth that t architect has built in honour of his skill in the other, before we can hope know where to have and where to hold. And why not so with love? W are we not to plunge into all its wondrous twists and mazes of passion, we want to apprehend its real mystery?—Bah! the man or woman eith that merely stands trembling on the brink, as the fearful school-boy shiv on the edge of the brook without courage to plunge his limbs into the doul ful depths, may talk of love—mince pretty amorous phrases tipped w shallow tinsel—but never can he dive into the recesses of Love's abode, a drag the son of Venus into the light of day."

"The man certainly talks," cried Deboos, "as if he had heard of lo before. But, if I may be allowed to put a question to so acute a genius would ask, whether there is not some danger of a person who plunges i these depths forgetting his philosophy, and remembering nothing but t excess of his passion?"

"That must depend on the time he allows himself to be involved. T true philosopher of love will take care to limit himself, so that his bark reason is in no danger of being swamped in his stream of passion."

"That is too general an answer," cried Deboos. "Take your own c for example, and tell us how long you may without danger be left in practice of furious strides, eager gazing up and down the street, bitter eja ulations, elevating of hands, and deep-fetched imprecations."

"That must be according to circumstances," replied the count, "and depend chiefly on the chain that introduces the next and the next up to the very climax. For instance--hark! surely I hear the wheels of a carriage—and yet—in my own case, good Deboos—yes! it is a chaise: it approaches —the proper time for throwing aside the strange list of incoherencies you have mentioned—Can it be?—the chaise stops here!—Gods, it is my Madeline!—Yes, Deboos; the proper time for forgetting incoherencies, and again resuming the reins of discretion, is now, my friends, NOW!"—and with this he rushed down stairs, to be in time to hand Madeline from the chaise.

CHAPTER X.

We must have these hues when we hawk for friends,
And wind about them like a subtle river,
That, seeming to run only on his course,
Doth search yet as he runs, and still finds out
The easiest parts of entry on the shore,
Gliding so slily by, as scarce it touch'd,
Yet still eats something in it.—CHAPMAN.

THE reason of Madeline's delay might have easily been explained, had she chosen it; but, in reply to such inquiries as the count thought he might venture to make, her answers were such as to leave him somewhat in the dark. On the whole, however, what he gathered led him to the conclusion (which, indeed, was a just one) that Albert had been the cause of the postponement of their arrival.

It was not till the morning after the count had quitted the inn, where he first met the orphans of Unwalden, that Madeline had an opportunity of gathering Albert's impressions as to their new found acquaintance. To her great surprise, she found that the youth was in alarm at the count's freedom of manners—that he had viewed with apprehension his intrusion into their apartment—and that he became acquainted with the arrangement his sister had made for meeting the count at Geneva with proportionate dislike. Why was it that Albert had imbibed these feelings? He himself hardly knew—or rather could not, from the novelty of the sensation, define that it arose from the overbearing contrast which the count's manners, as a man of the world, full of Nature's and Fortune's good graces, formed with his own gentleness of temper and retiringness of disposition. Much passed between the brother and sister on the subject; and more than once Madeline was on the point of yielding to the feelings of her companion, though, in that event, a return to Unwalden, instead of an advance to Geneva, must have been the consequence.

It was this last position that, in the end, turned the scale; for, when Albert understood that through the count they were to discover Madame Lalande, and when he remembered that through Madame Lalande was their only hope of discovering Seaton, he felt that his dislike for De Mara was but as a feather in the balance; and entreating his sister to forget what he had said in detriment of their new friend, he insisted on proceeding to Geneva.

But though Madeline took care to give none of these circumstances to De Mara on his arrival, she let enough drop in her *mauvaise honte* excuses to lead him to suspect that the cause of the delay had, in some way or another, arisen from Albert. The hatreds of the count were as soon bestowed as his affections—as strong and as resolute; and no sooner did he conceive that he had for one moment been thwarted through the instrumentality of Albert, than he transferred to him a dislike as determined as was the passion which inflamed his heart for Madeline. Nor did it appear likely that this new feeling, on the part of the count, would be lessened by the conduct of Albert: who, though careful not to evince the apprehensions he entertained of the nobleman, could not help, in his want of all knowledge of the *savoir vivre*, showing in his behaviour a timidity and hesitation which were not calculated to allay the suspicions which De Mara had begun to entertain.

The feelings which Albert had thus imbibed with respect to the count

were not of a nature to give ease to Madeline in her prosecution of the task she had undertaken; and if her journey from Unwalden to the inn where she first met De Mara tasted of unpleasantness and discomfort, still more bitter was that which conducted her from her night's lodging to Geneva.

What a strange contrast between her journey and that of the count! He, in the midst of night, with the heavy shade of indiscernible crags overhanging him, had galloped along, light of heart—hot-blooded and eager in the furtherance of his desire—and that desire most sensual, selfish, and unholy. Madeline, on the other hand, had the blithe sun to guide her on the way; while the precipices, that in night's darkness were the parents of terror and dismay, had, by the light of day, softened into the originators of wonder and admiration; and yet, with these differences in her favour, her course was heavy and grievous. Was it then that her desire was still more selfish and unholy than that of the count?—Oh, how contrary was it to every thing either selfish or unholy! Love for Albert—love for Seaton—sorrow for her fault—anxiety to amend it—were the sole occupants of her heart; and though she travelled with the commission of an error weighing heavily upon her soul, how venial—how trifling—how less than nothing would it appear when set against that which was in the imagination of De Mara, and which to him was his pride, his glory, and his triumph! Compare De Mara's self-willed and determined prosecution of his greedy passion with the poor maiden's oft-repented fault, and the one

—Almost as infinite as all,
The other blank as nothing.

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And yet Madeline was the child of sorrow—De Mara the guest of joy; a true but painful illustration that happiness is not always within virtue's command, and that conscience—the hackney and the bug-bear—may as easily be a slave as a tyrant.

But it is full time to return to the thread of our narrative.

The first interview between Deboos and Madeline passed off entirely to the count's satisfaction; and though he watched each motion of the former, to see whether she committed herself; and of the latter, to ascertain whether she suspected any thing, he could not help, when all was done, confessing that the whole scene had been performed by the counterfeit Lalande in a most masterly manner.

The consequences of this success were what De Mara had foreseen. Madeline, full of respect and growing affection for a woman who had been the friend, the confidante, and the adviser of her mother, showed herself ready to adopt her suggestions on all points; and the influence of the count was thus made sure as far as opportunity and agency could effect. He had too good an opinion of his talents for intrigue to doubt for a moment that the rest must follow in the course that he should be pleased to mark out.

The only thing that harassed his prospects was the increasing anxiety which Madeline still displayed to discover the retreat of Seaton. It was in vain that the fictitious Madame Lalande assured her that in the end it must happen that the old man would relent and re-appear, and that her mother's former friend must be the certain channel through which he would signify that alteration; still Madeline was unable to overcome the self-reproach that haunted her. Any unusual sound in the house made her start from her seat as if in expectation of its being the announcer of the return of the lost one; and the door could not open without her quick eye being eagerly raised to ascertain whether he who entered was the object of her hope.

But if this anxiety to discover Seaton had been the sum of the case, the count's uneasiness would have been materially lessened, for he fairly inferred that, as long as Deboos was to Madeline the real Lalande, the lapse of time must soften her regrets on account of Seaton. His greatest apprehension, however, was that Seaton might be really lingering in Geneva, or the neighbourhood of Unwalden: and in a moment of returning softness seek out the children of his adoption. If, therefore, on the approach of some unwonted sound, or the unexpected opening of the door Madeline's gaze was one of life and expectation, no less was that of the count one of dread and nervous anticipation.

De Mara, however, was not a man to remain idle in expectation of an evil. The enervating sensation that arises from an ill-omened anticipation was speedily shaken off by him, and he set himself earnestly to work, to devise the best means to controvert the mischief which appeared to threaten, and to intercept the approach of Seaton, should that elder, in a relenting moment, seek Madeline and her brother. It was not long that De Mara wavered as to the course he should adopt: he determined to invade what might be called the head-quarters of the enemy at once, and thus ascertain the best and the worst of the accident that he anticipated. With this view he set his emissaries to work to discover the abode of the real Madame Lalande, that means might be adopted to obtain from her the secret (if she had it) of Seaton's retreat.

This was not a task of any great difficulty. Her residence was discovered, and the most careful and secret inquiry was instituted for the purpose of ascertaining whether within the last few days any stranger, whose description would tally with that of Seaton, had been observed as a visiter to the house. Every information that could be procured on this head seemed to negative the idea that Seaton had chosen—personally at least—to make Madame Lalande his confidante. But the count still remained unsatisfied as to the general result: it might be possible that his agents were mistaken in the intelligence which they had brought him; and, still further, it was even probable, that though Seaton might not have chosen to seek a personal interview with the lady, a letter from him might have already informed her of the course he had adopted, and set her on the *qui vive* as to the movements of the orphans.

With these reflections pressing upon him, the count resolved upon an inquiry of Madame Lalande herself, as the only conclusive means by which he could securely ascertain what there was to hope or fear. But the difficulty here was to find one competent to undertake the task. For himself, he did not choose to appear so palpably in the business, as, in the event of a discovery taking place, it would so implicate him with the deception practised on Madeline, as entirely to shut the door of reconciliation against him. Deboos also appeared to him a dangerous instrument to employ on this occasion, as it was obviously his cue to keep the two Lalandes as far asunder as possible. With these two exceptions he could fix his mind on none of whose ability to undertake the office he was sufficiently assured. The more he considered the undertaking, the greater were the difficulties that presented themselves to his mind; and the danger, supposing that Madame Lalande as yet knew nothing of what had been doing at Unwalden, of rousing her mind to suspicion and inquiry, increased every moment that he had the matter under his consideration.

In this dilemma he applied to Deboos, though not without some fear that she would consider herself so all-competent to the undertaking, as to hear of none other for the office. In this, however, he was mistaken: either Deboos was convinced by the reasons which the count gave for her non-appearance as far as Madame Lalande was concerned, or she had no inclination to undertake this extra labour. The count, however, obtained

her advice on the affair, which, bad or good, amounted to this—that De Mara's plan, as far as it went, should be followed, but that in the event of its proving unsuccessful in procuring the required information, steps should be taken to remove Madame Lalande from Geneva.

But still the same difficulty presented itself—a fit and proper person to perform the sinuous office that was to lead to these conclusions.

"I wonder," said Deboos with a sneer, when De Mara reiterated the difficulty which this point presented—"I wonder that you have not selected your favourite Altoz for the task."

"Altoz!" cried the count; "I would as soon appoint that deaf nonentity, Madeline's brother; for where the one would be deaf, the other would be dumb—and both in the very vitals of the question."

"And yet you thought the chevalier worthy of being your aid-de-camp in the very outset of the adventure."

"It was circumstances, and not I," cried the count, "that elected him to that post of honour:—besides, I was in hopes, that under your tuition something might be made of him; but he appears to grow more obtuse than ever. You are the two ends of the needle, and the more exactly you point to the pole, the further is he from it."

"Oh, your servant," replied the lady with a curtsey, "I see that I must do something to repay so much concession in my favour; and yet I know no one to whom in candour I dare recommend your commission."

"Candour! I am content that you should use the word. But will you let it hold good for the next five minutes?"

Deboos gave the questioner a scrutinising glance, as if to ask his meaning; and then drily replied, "certainly, count."

"Then read this billet, and give me a judgment upon it."

Deboos took the paper which the count tendered her; but no sooner did she cast her eye on the handwriting, than an involuntarily shudder came over her. After an effort she read the following as its contents—

"Count De Mara—Deboos is not unwise—but there is one still more canny at her elbow. Your last three hundred louis were handsomely palatable. Perhaps the management of Lalande would be worth another hundred?"

"Villain!" muttered Deboos.

"Many thanks for the compliment," cried De Mara, somewhat bluntly.

"Nay, count, the epithet was not applied to you. I will not pretend to deny that I know the handwriting of the letter; but beware how you engage with its author."

"Your caution is just, if I may judge by the price he asks. Besides, I always look with an eye of suspicion on your anonymous correspondents. A man that is ashamed to sign his name at the bottom of a letter, cannot, even in his own opinion, be superlatively trustworthy. But these three hundred louis—I confess I should like your explanation of that."

Deboos paused for a minute, as if revolving matters within her own mind, and then, with a fixed eye and compressed lips, as though she was forcing herself to do something against her whole soul's inclination, she said, "Count, on two conditions I will undertake that Madame Lalande shall be both sifted as to her knowledge of Seaton, and removed from Geneva for awhile."

"Are the conditions reasonable?"

"It is for you to answer that; but at all events they are the only ones on which I can undertake the task."

"At least, then, what are they?"

"First, that you demand no explanation of my agent or my means; and secondly, that the hundred louis mentioned in this scrawl be paid to me."

De Mara demurred for awhile to these terms; but at length finding that the proposer was inexorable, and reflecting on the apparent importance of the points she promised to effect, he agreed to both conditions, after obtaining from her a pledge that she herself was to have no personal interference with Madame Lalande.

It is not necessary to detail the means by which Madame Lalande was attacked; it is sufficient to state that in both points Deboos kept her word. It was fully ascertained that Seaton's motions as yet were unknown to Madame Lalande, for she was not even aware that he had quitted Unwalden; and in two days from the period of the conversation just detailed she was on her way to Genoa.

But the motive that induced Deboos to undertake the task was curious. The letter, which the count had put into her hand, she at once perceived to be in a handwriting familiar to her, as she had already admitted to De Mara. It was the handwriting of Urfort; and though she could not very well comprehend how he had dived to the bottom of the count's intentions towards Madame Lalande, she knew enough of the man to be sure that, once having proceeded so far as to write to her employer on the subject, no argument would be sufficient to stay his future movements towards inducing the count to employ him, unless indeed his keeping from his presence could be made equally profitable to him.

To Deboos it was all-important that such an interview should never take place, and she was determined to resist it at any sacrifice. It was for this reason that she volunteered to find any agent suited to the purposes of the count, on condition that the hundred louis mentioned in the letter should be hers; and as soon as De Mara had signified his assent, she hastened to find Urfort, lest his known impatience of character should have already induced him to take further steps towards meeting the nobleman.

"Urfort," said she, as soon as she had discovered his retreat, "I will not reproach you with breach of all faith, and violation of all principle, for I know you to be a man who laughs at the one and despises the other."

"A well-turned sentence!" cried the man; "may I ask then, why I have been sought out in this, my sanctum of jollity?"

"You have written to the Count de Mara."

"Humph!"

"And I bring you his answer."

"Good, my Deboos; now I respect you again. But the terms—the terms?"

"I cannot tell you them till I know from you how much of this affair you are acquainted with."

"Why, I should expect about as much as you know yourself. The count has a good audible voice, and if you will talk secrets with one man while another lies concealed in your house, you should not be surprised that the walls blab a little."

"But you were concealed in the out-house on the night that De Mara and the chevalier came to my abode on horseback."

"Not entirely: though no woman, I do not profess to be altogether free from curiosity; and, as a knock at the door of a peaceable house two hours after midnight had something alarming in it, I took the liberty of shifting my quarters from the out-house to that snug little back-parlour of yours, where I heard enough to give me an insight into affairs."

"Villain!" muttered Deboos—"but then you know not what has taken place since."

"I cannot exactly say that, either; for, not knowing what better to do with my time, I followed up the story. Seaton is a nincompoop—Made-

line a pretty creature—and the count a fine gentleman. Now, may I know the terms of his reply?"

"They are these. Discover what knowledge Lalande has of Seaton, and send her on a wild-goose chase for a month, and the count engages to pay you the hundred louis that your letter so unconscionably demands; though, what you can want with them, after having so lately had three hundred, I cannot conceive."

"Oh, the roulette-table can answer that question better than I. But are there any other conditions?"

"Only that I am in all cases to be the go-between in your communications with the count. He would not in any way personally appear in the matter."

"With all my heart. Though, if the gentleman is so very nice as to his company, how came you to be of the party?"

The only answer that Deboos gave to this insulting question was a look of supreme contempt.

"Well," continued Urfort, "at least you can look like a duchess, and that is half the battle. However, *au revoir*. Two days hence, at this hour expect me at your own house—crowned with success, and see that the hundred louis be ready.

At the expiration of the two days, Urfort punctually kept his appointment with Deboos—convinced her of his success—received his hundred louis—again solemnly promised to quit Geneva, and took his departure.

As soon as the count was assured that the real Madame Lalande was sufficiently removed from the scene of action to be no longer dangerous to his schemes, he continued the prosecution of his design upon Madeline with redoubled ardour.

The superadded information that Seaton had not yet corresponded with Madame Lalande also greatly contributed to his satisfaction, for it bore tacit testimony of the senior still being in the same state of offended feeling that possessed his mind, when he penned his farewell letter to the now friendless wanderers of Unwalden.

Hitherto De Mara had not dared to introduce Madeline to the amusements which the place afforded, lest by some unlucky mischance they should light upon the friend of her mother, and the *éclaircissement* so dreaded by him should take place: but now that this stumbling-block was removed, he felt that he could not adopt a better course than promote that gaiety, vivacity, and elasticity of mind, which were so peculiarly the characteristics of the disposition of his mistress. The physicians of the human body ever recommend their patients to vary the scene, and the air, and the thoughts—well knowing that such a variety will mainly contribute to an eradication of that diseased state which they have been called in to cure. In like manner De Mara felt that in the first instance he must act as physician to Madeline's mind, and he knew no better way to

> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,

than by affording her those amusing excitements which should act as "some sweet oblivious antidote."

To a great extent his plan was successful. Educated in a Swiss village, Madeline's mind had been narrowed in its external opportunities, while, within, it was ready every moment to leap from its boundaries and climb the mountain-chain of its own creation. Driven by the sameness of each day's circle to feed upon itself, her fancy, which could not bear to be inert, had grown eccentric and out of human fashion. It had formed its own theories, solved its own doubts, painted its own pictures, raised its own

castles, and blazoned its own track with wondrous facility, but with that natural error of judgment which attends our first efforts, immatured by the philosophy of ages, or the experience of a present world. Madeline might have exclaimed, with infinitely more justice than the hymnist—

My mind to me a kingdom is;

for it was her only free land of poetry and imagination, and therefore all in all her kingdom to the very letter of the word. All her ideas being trained in this school, she was necessarily led to make every new fact and thought that crossed her path of knowledge subservient to this system. If, indeed, the whole wisdom of a Bacon, an Aristotle, or a Shaftesbury, could have burst upon her at once, it might have redeemed her from the gulf of fiction in which she was immersed. But the little knowledge that she gained came to her piece-meal: it was extracted in the course of desultory conversation or incidental observation, and reached her mind in such small and detached particles, that she had time to fashion one fragment to the established coinage of her brain before another presented itself for consideration.

This being the state of her mind, it need be no matter of surprise that the proceeding of De Mara, in this respect, led to the conclusion that he expected. Exquisite music, poured forth by a well trained orchestra—thrilling songs from the lips of grace and beauty—the scenic illusion of a well imagined drama, man's glorious transfer of Nature's purest excellences to the imitative canvass—all took possession of her soul—all stirred up the seeds of wonder, admiration, and delight, that till now had lain dormant in her composition, and gradually roused her thoughts from that cloudy tinge of melancholy which her disappointed inquiries after Seaton had imposed upon them.

But this was not the only advantage that De Mara reaped from this introduction of a continual round of amusement. It not only roused Madeline from her feelings of discomfort, but gave her an *enjouissance* for the society of her companions. It is difficult to be continually happy in company with a certain set of individuals, without imbibing a kindly feeling towards the individuals themselves; they become identified with our content of mind, and their presence adds to our own self-complacency. Pleasure is not only pleasurable in itself but receives a fresh accession of the same sensation from anticipation and retrospection; and no circumstance gives more immediate rise to this "first and last," than the presence of those with whom we have enjoyed, or are to enjoy, any given amusement. The heart is filled at such an epoch, and runs over at the tongue; notes are compared, impressions are balanced, images and feelings are developed, and every moment something new, or hitherto unperceived, is added to what was formerly supposed to be the *ultimatum* of the pleasure capable of being produced by the stated enjoyment.

Madeline felt all this with an uncommon keenness of perception; for, while she was the child of nature, and only gave utterance to those first impressions which the higher works of art will produce on the simple imagination, De Mara and Deboos, who were her chief companions, supplied her active spirit with quaint allusions, apt illustrations, and other supplies, drawn from education and a knowledge of the world, which taught her first to pause at her own ignorance, and then eagerly to pursue the subject to the very utmost of their information.

But though the names of De Mara and Deboos are here coupled, there was a great distinction between the two in the mind of Madeline. For Deboos, as Madame Lelande, she entertained affection and respect; but there was, nevertheless, something in the manner of this female which inspired the maiden with awe, and which prevented her drawing close to

her as the companion of her lighter hours—as the confidante of her freest thoughts. With De Mara she had none of this restraint. He appeared to her amiable, attentive, aud desirous of meeting her every wish; he found the means of bringing himself down to her own level of worldly knowledge; or, if he ever tutored her, it was with the joyous ease of a companion, rather than the superior information of a master. She had the sensation within her that she could ask him any question without feeling that she was exposing herself to contempt or ridicule; and she felt grateful, without knowing it, for the facility with which he moved on the same plane with herself.

Although it was no part of the count's design that Madeline should shrink from the closest intimacy with the pretended Madame Lalande, the contrary being the case was highly advantageous to his purpose, for it more completely threw the maiden upon him as a companion; and, in equal proportion, afforded him opportunities of making for himself an interest in her heart. The word love had not yet passed the lips of De Mara, nor had it entered the mind of Madeline; but, though the word was absent, the sentiment was fast taking possession of her mind. Courteousness, amiability, watchfulness, address, and personal beauty, as far as beauty is compatible with genuine manliness, were all in favour of the count; and he beheld with secret and well-dissembled rapture, that he was rapidly gaining supreme empire over the heart of his proposed victim.

CHAPTER XI.

Nature, that loves not to be question'd
Why she did this or that, but has her ends,
And knows she does well, never gave the world
Two things so opposite, so contrary,
As he and I are.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER'S PHILASTER.

Innocence, the sacred amulet
'Gainst all the poisons of infirmity,
Of all misfortune, injury, and death.—OLD PLAY.

THE only drawback to Count de Mara's delight at the progress of his scheme was the evident dissatisfaction of Albert at what was going on. The young man had never been able to get over the first impression that De Mara's conduct had left upon his mind; and the dislike which the count, on the other hand, had imbibed for him, owing to his supposed interference on the day of the orphan's journey to Geneva, had in no wise tended to bring them more closely together. But, though this feeling was predominant in De Mara's mind, he had by no means permitted himself to neglect the boy as long as he was unsure of an interest in the heart of his sister. Albert, as well as every other person or circumstance connected with Madeline, had been duly considered, and a reception given to him such as appeared to the schemer most likely to afford satisfaction to his mistress.

Thus far all was sufficient to lull any feeling of neglect towards her brother, that might otherwise have taken root in Madeline's bosom; but had Albert been disposed to complain, there was still enough in the conduct of the count to justify the step. Man of the world as De Mara was, there was nevertheless something in his relative situation with Albert to embarrass him. The youth's unfortunate bereavement of hearing re-

fused the count those opportunities of sifting his character through his own confessions, that in any other case would have been his surety as to the game he was to play; and the natural hesitation that arises between two persons, both of whom have reason to think that there is a mutual misunderstanding existing in each other's mind, considerably strengthened the embarrassment that the count fell from the above-mentioned cause.

Albert, however, was not of a complaining disposition. Whatever his sorrows might be, they were always borne with meekness, and he had learned from the state of deprivation under which he had all his life laboured, patiently to bow to that which discomforted him, rather than uselessly to fight against it. Nevertheless, there was no want of firmness of mind in this. In fact, this very characteristic proceeded from strength of intellect--but it was the strength of endurance, not that of execution.

Albert's original cause of dissatisfaction with the count is already made known; but by this time a second ground had arisen--not perhaps so much attributable to De Mara himself as the first--but equally forcible in making Albert regard the meeting with that nobleman as an unfortunate event for himself and his sister.

We have seen in the last chapter how successfully the count pursued his object of gaining the affections of Madeline. If Albert did not also perceive this, at all events he perceived the effects that that success produced. When he was living at Unwalden, he had been in the keeping of his natural counsellors, and the attentions of his parent and of Madeline were as though he had two mothers tending him. It was not the difference of two years only that gave rise to the protecting character which Madeline had thus obtained. The misfortune under which he laboured had doubly thrown him upon her for amusement, instruction, and regard; and the bonds of affection between them had become proportionably strong. When their mother died, all these feelings mounted still higher, and to Albert his sister was as necessary as the compass to the mariner who has left all trace of land behind.

Thus much then for their former situation;—but since their arrival at Geneva things are changed. It was impossible for a young and beautiful woman, with a mind as vivid and as rapid of perception as Madeline's was, to burst from solitude to what in the comparison was the acmè of gaiety, without unconsciously admitting a change into her manners and thoughts. The suddenness of the transition took her, as it were, out of her former self: she was wrapt in a novel and irresistible habit of excitement; and the power which she possessed over the count—the ease with which he bowed to all her wishes—the facility with which he adopted her suggestions and turned them into realities--all contributed to make a new creature of her.

The effect of this alteration of circumstance was keenly felt by her brother. Instead of being a companion--or rather, as formerly, a something between a mistress and a servant to him—Madeline was little more than a sort of dropper in upon his weary hours. When indeed he did have her to himself, and she again devoted her minutes to his amusement, he felt that her powers of giving delight had been enhanced by the novelties she had gained in her absence; but this superiority of attraction again only the more embittered the hours when her presence was wanting.

This, then, was the second ground of dissatisfaction which Albert found towards the count. So thorough was his belief in the entireness of his sister's affections towards himself, that he did not for a moment attribute to her the change that had taken place. He looked round for the circumstances that had caused it, and he found them in the actions of De Mara. It was he who engrossed Madeline's attention when they were within doors—and it was he that was for ever proposing excursions, visits, and

parties of pleasure, in which Albert was a mere cipher and dead letter. This being the sum of Albert's observations, it naturally followed that the estrangement which he already entertained towards the count should be heightened, and that in his own inward communings, which in proportion as he was deprived of the companionship of Madeline became more and more frequent, he should acutely feel the disappointed hours that he owed to the appearance of the stranger.

Let us, however, here take an opportunity of doing justice to Madeline. Had she for a moment perceived—or even supposed—the pain that her change of manners was inflicting on her brother, from that instant she would again have exclusively become his companion, his solace, and his attendant. But how could she perceive the effect that her change had caused in Albert's feelings, when she was not even conscious that that change in herself had taken place? As we have before had occasion to remark, the essence of the girl's temperament was ardency. Ardency was equally her good and her evil genius;—her good genius, as it had led her to that excess of devotion to the service of her unfortunate brother, which had so soothed his sorrows;—her evil genius, as it was now plunging her into too rash and headlong an enjoyment of the gay scenes with which it was the count's care incessantly to feed her disposition. If Albert was neglected, it was not that her affection for him was diminished in the minutest iota—but that she suffered herself to be hurried down the stream of temptation, without giving herself time to consider whether what was delightful to her was not distasteful to him.

The care with which Albert concealed his dissatisfaction from his sister was another argument in palliation of her not perceiving the effect that her change had upon him. It was in this point of view that the youth showed that endurance was one of his virtues. He perceived the zest with which his sister had entered into the gaieties of Geneva, and the happiness that they afforded her; and he was too affectionately interested in her contentments to suffer a word or a look of his to run counter to her satisfaction. Indeed his chief delight, now that he was to so great an extent shut out from her course of thought, was to sit and gaze at the joyous smiles that illumined her face: it was his map of pleasures, whereon were laid down the different lands and seas that made his little world of observation; and, though perhaps the whole was not planned out with sufficient clearness, he was content in the spirit of kindliness to act on the mistake which the poet in the spirit of satire lays to the charge of geographers, who

———— on pathless downs
Place elephants instead of towns;

and so long as latitude and longitude come within the tropics of joy, Albert cared little for the peculiar from which they originated.

But the re-action of his reflections fell all the heavier for this upon the count; and in proportion as he acquitted his sister of unkindness, the intrusion of that nobleman was aggravated in his eyes. Perhaps a deeper philosopher than Albert would have felt that thanks were due to the individual who had thus heightened the enjoyment of a person whom he loved so entirely: but Albert could not regard without envy the engrossing quality of De Mara's attentions to Madeline; nor had he forgotten the forwardness of his manners at the inn, which, from the very first moment of their becoming acquainted, had impressed him with the feeling that there was an assumption of superiority on the part of the stranger, which was not compatible with a happy issue to the intimacy that had succeeded. Had the youth been more acquainted with the world and the world's ways, he would probably have taken steps gradually to alienate his sister from

the count, and to render the visits of the latter less frequent. But Albert's capacity did not consist in such manœuvres as these. He was not without knowledge; for his mother, whose ingenuity had been the means of teaching him to read and talk in spite of his unfortunate bereavement, had taken care to follow up these first steps by putting into his hands the best books she could procure: but his knowledge was not of a sort likely to be useful in contending against the subtlety of such an accomplished intriguer as the Count de Mara; and Albert therefore was obliged to be content to endure the annoyance to which his presence gave rise, without taking any active steps to relieve himself from the burden.

Another apology for Madeline's apparent neglect of her brother was the intimacy with which she perceived to be growing up between him and the supposed Madame Lalande. Although this lady could be sufficiently sarcastic, or even repulsive, when it was a Chevalier Altoz that she had to engage, yet towards the gentle Albert her characteristics were entirely different. In her intercourse with the youth there was no encounter of wits —no suspicious compliments that leaned more towards invective than goodwill. On the contrary, Albert regarded her as the early and respected friend of the being whom he had loved best and lamented most; and, as such, bowed to her suggestions and remarks with the most confident reliance. This feeling, that originally sprang from association and sentiment, soon established itself on the surer foundation of superiority of intellect and decision of character, for in Deboos both these qualities prevailed in an eminent degree; and to a mind like Albert's, weak in its practical scope, though strong in its power of judgment, such characteristics had more than their usual weight.

The attention and respect which Albert paid to her were, in the first instance, highly flattering to the fictitious Madame Lalande, and this feeling gradually ripened into affection towards the youth. Deboos had not always been the slave of wicked intriguers, or at the service of those who carried their money in their hand; nor had her present debasement entirely overwhelmed those earlier sentiments which are the native inmates of every human bosom, till crimes, or misfortunes, or hardships, have ossified them, and made them insensible to feeling. Albert's conduct towards her, therefore, not only took her by surprise, but found a nook within her heart not absolutely filled up. Long was it unavailing—slow was it in penetration—but at length it effected a lodgment in the deserted corner, and summoned the owner back to long-forgotten sensations of kindness and cherishment.

Madeline, without particularly scanning the progress of this companionship, saw it rise into sufficient intimacy to make her rejoice that Albert had found in her mother's chosen friend a person from whom he could obtain advice and amusement. It delighted her to find that they were ever together, and that Madame Lalande never seemed better pleased than when she was pursuing some course in which Albert could take part and feel an interest.

But the maiden, as was her wont, judged somewhat too hastily in coming to this conclusion. Had she been right, Albert would not so bitterly have felt her engrossment by the count. It was true, indeed, that he made a companion of Deboos—but she was not a complete companion. She had instruction for him, and even amusement—but not that wonderful sympathy, that fine intermingling of heart and soul in his occupations, with which Madeline's actions appeared always to teem.

It was not immediately that Deboos perceived the impression that Albert had made upon her mind. Her first intercouse with him arose rather from necessity than from choice; for although Madeline was as attentive to her, as she was bound to be to the supposed intimate of her deceased mother, yet her time was for the most part occupied by the count and his never-

failing inventions to attract her imagination, when it was Deboos' care, of course, not to interfere more than was absolutely necessary.

At these periods, and they were of pretty frequent recurrence, Albert was her natural resource; and though she at first handled him as a toy of indifference, taken up for want of something better to while away the listless hours, she soon found, to her surprise, that there were seeds within his composition which promised the most goodly harvest, and which rendered the tending of them a delightful task.

While matters stood thus, a circumstance occurred, not of much value in itself, but sufficient to confirm Deboos most effectually in the kindly feelings she had begun to entertain towards Albert.

As soon as this artful woman found she had succeeded in imposing herself on the orphans of Unwalden as the friend of their mother, she had proceeded, under the direction of De Mara, to furnish them with apartments, at which she was a daily visiter, having, in order to avoid the chance of an unlucky *éclaircissement*, made a satisfactory excuse for not lodging her guests in her own house; to which abode, for the same reason, she had always avoided introducing them. It was at these lodgings provided for the new comers that the count made his daily appearance, always taking care to arrive after Deboos, in order that the delicacy of Madeline might not be alarmed in receiving a visit from him alone.

It happened one morning that the fictitious Madame Lalande had suffered her usual hour of arrival considerably to elapse without making her appearance; and by no very extraordinary coincidence some trifle caused Madeline to be eagerly watching for her coming, so that each moment of her absence was counted. At length, the fineness of the morning tempting her, and having some vague idea of the quarter of the city in which the residence of the lady was situated—though vague it only could be, for Deboos had always answered with uncertainty any question that tended to draw from her her exact address—she set out in the hope that she might either find her way to Madame Lalande's abode, or meet her on her route thence.

Madeline had not long been gone on this errand before the count arrived. He was surprised at the maiden's absence, for it was unlike her usual habits; but he at first concluded that she and Deboos had gone out together. When, however, he learned from Albert the real state of the case, and that it was to the delayed arrival of Madame Lalande that Madeline's exit was attributable, his surprise quickly changed into anger towards his agent, for thus, by her absence, provoking the egress of his mistress.

At this moment Deboos arrived without having met Madeline on her road. It was an unauspicious minute, for the count was full of disappointment, and (allowing for the deafness of Albert) there were none by to check his expression of it.

Perhaps, had the count, before he commenced the attack, paused for a moment to scan her countenance, he might have altered his intention. The expression that dwelt in the lines of her face, and the rapid movement of her eye, would have reminded him of that strange aspect which had greeted him on the night on which he had beat so long and so loud at her door, and which taught him by implication, that it was no time to trifle, or to venture too far with a roused woman of Deboos' temperament.

Without, however, any such pause, he received her on entering with a low bow to the ground. Deboos might have mistaken the sentiment—but she looked in his face, and it was impossible. Giving her hand to Albert in token of a kind good-morrow, she returned the count's greeting with as slowly profound a curtesy.

"Your salute," cried the angry nobleman, "is typical of the speed with which you move. I return you my best thanks for the way in which you

discharge your duty. Perhaps by this time Madeline may have escaped me for ever."

Deboos was, as ever, in no humour to submit to a taunt in silence. "As to my salute," replied she, "you can have no claim to quarrel with that, for its grade was borrowed from your own. And as to my speed, as you yourself have compared it to what was copied from yourself, I should be equally free from censure in your eyes."

"Answered like a wrangler," cried the count, still more sourly, "ever defending most vehemently where there is least room for defence. I tell you, madam, my money has been paid for your time—Heaven knows dearly enough; and therefore most just cause of complaint have I when I find my whole plans running a thousand risks, because you cannot rise in time to suit decent people."

"Count," cried the accused hastily, "were your miserable taunts worth answering, I would tell you that it was your business, and not mine, that detained me this morning. To gratify you I employed an agent to remove Madame Lalande, who is now the bane of my every hour, and who, if once let loose, would effectually mar every thing."

"Psha! woman, do you think I am to be deceived by these hacknied terms of Romance, or that a Centaur with a Chimæra for a tail can frighten me. I am more angry with you for attempting to pass such a trick upon me, than at the failure for which this was intended as an excuse."

"De Mara, one day you may be made to know."

"Be silent, madam, I pray—"

"Silent! Am I first to be accused, and then deprived of my right to— ?"

"Oh! the eleven thousand virgins," cried the count, "what hurricane is this?" And he hastily put his hand on Deboos' mouth, more perhaps in joke than in earnest, but sufficiently unceremoniously to awaken the anger of Albert; who, though he had not been able to hear this scene, had watched it with growing interest, well interpreting the feeling that dictated each sentence, and not a little hurt that the count, a mere visiter, should presume to speak with such angry tone and gesture to one that was held so dear by Madeline and himself. But when De Mara proceeded so far as to stop the mouth of Madame Lalande, Albert was roused into action; and what perhaps he would not in a hundred years have done for himself, his affection and manhood irresistibly impelled him to do for her whom he believed to be his mother's kind adviser and his own protecting counsellor. He pushed rapidly between the two without uttering a word; and giving the nobleman an unexpected thrust, which nearly threw him from his balance, he placed Deboos' arm within his own, as if intimating he was determined at all hazards to continue his interference in her behalf.

The count, though his dignity as well as his person was somewhat overbalanced by Albert's unceremonious move, perceived in an instant that he had made a false step, and hastened to retrieve it. Indeed, for the moment of the action, which had so excited the reprehension of the orphan, he had quite forgotten his presence in the room, and consequently had not calculated the effect that it would produce upon him.

It is unnecessary, however, to puruse this scene further. It is sufficient to remark that this transaction was the parent of two effects. The one was, that the mutual suspicion of the count and of Albert was increased;—the former feeling that there was something extant in the youth's spirit, of which he had not formerly been aware, but which appeared to be of a nature formidable and difficult to be managed;—while the latter (with all his mind set upon an action of which his whole previous life of monotony could not furnish the parallel) perceived that something now existed and was on record, tangibly expressive of the sense he had always entertained of De Mara. The other effect that here took its origin was that produced

in the mind of Deboos. Albert's little action in her behalf had penetrated her very heart. The husk of her time-seared feelings fell away before it, and was destroyed, for she acknowledged in it the first overt act that for many and many a year had been done to redeem her from among the neglected of the world. Hitherto, though her heart had been gradually yielding, she had looked with jealousy on the movements of Madeline in her favour, and even on those of Albert: she had endeavoured to steel herself against them. She had said, "These are pleasant, but they are fallacies: anon they will fall off, and be as nothing; and Deboos in her old age must take care that she is not again the victim of sympathy and girl-heartedness." But this little act of Albert had caused a total revolution in her thoughts. It was now she who sought the youth, and not he her; and she became as attached to him, as devoted to his wishes, and as anxious of his movements, as if she really had been the chosen and confidential friend of his mother, or even that mother herself.

As Madeline, by common consent, was not made acquainted with this transaction, her feelings towards all parties remained the same; and the count still found her the willing partaker of his proposed round of amusements—the bashful, but not unheedful, listener to his tale of love. Imperceptibly, but by irresistible gradations, the net that De Mara had so artfully woven round her was closing upon her; and her anxious look in his absence, her joy-illumined countenance in his presence, were the unerring foretellers of the success of the nobleman in implanting his image on her heart.

CHAPTER XII.

Nor censure us, you who perceive
My best beloved and me,
Sigh and lament, complain and grieve,
You think we disagree.
Alas! 'tis sacred jealousy,
Love raised to an extreme,
The only proof 'twixt them and me—
We love and do not dream.—ROCHESTER.

THE Count De Mara, having thus far gained his point in carrying the affections of Madeline, thought that the time for pressing his suit more vigorously was fully arrived, and he turned his attention to the way in which this might be most skilfully executed. The great bar to his progress now seemed to be Albert's continual presence at all his interviews with Madeline, conscious as he was that the brother must be watching every one of his motions as regarded the sister, and scanning his intentions towards her with the most jealous survey. But De Mara began to hope that the time was at length come when he had interest enough in Madeline's affections to venture putting himself in the scale against Albert, and that if the approaching steps were managed with caution, it would be no difficult task gradually to detach the orphans from their present close bond of union. Part of the labour was already done: Madeline had adopted a chain of amusements in which Albert felt but slight interest; for to him music's poetry was dead, and the gay dramatic scene was a sort of minor torture, where the eye only informed the mind more forcibly of the loss which she had elsewhere sustained: and, on the other hand, the brother had found a new companionship in the attentions of Deboos, which appeared to be daily

more relished and desired. All that remained, therefore, for the count to do was to adopt the foundation that was already laid, and build a goodly superstructure on it, fit in its qualities and parts to effect the manœuvre which he had in hand.

The feelings that had by turns pervaded De Mara's mind with respect to Albert are not unworthy of notice. When he first saw him at the road-side inn, he scarcely observed him, except so far as he formed a feature in Madeline's delicious narrative which had carried the count's whole soul along with it. He might have been a human creature, or he might not, for any thing that the count condescended to know about him. He was a neutrality—a piece of furniture—a something that made up the *tout ensemble* of the apartment, admitted to a place on the expectation and understanding of being of no significance. It is one of the grand mistakes of those lovers, who think they condescend in loving where they do, to pass over as unobservant all the former retinue of their mistress. Such a suitor hopes to make his love individual, and to get rid of what he holds to be superfluities, but what the other party has always looked to as component parts of herself. He imagines that as he loves only one member of a body that have hitherto been indissolubly joined, the remainder is to be thrown away at his beck and bidding, and be annihilated at "the whiff and wind" of his *sic jubeo*. It is as though he would adopt from choice Ceres' hapless mistake, and feed only on the shoulder of Pelops, rejecting the rest of the dish. It was thus with the Count De Mara; and, Frenchman as he was, he forgot the maxim inculcated by one of the greatest philosophers of his nation, when he says, "I should approve a soul that had divers stories in its structure—one that knows how to bend and how to slacken; that finds itself at ease in every condition of fortune, that can converse with a neighbour of his buildings, his hunting, or any trifling dispute between him and another; that can chat with a carpenter or gardener with pleasure." But De Mara could not do these things gracefully even when his interest required it. Either his nature was averse to the condescension, or he deemed his own merits sufficient without calling in the aid of so adventitious an ally.

But when the scene changed from the road-side inn to Geneva, the aspect in which the count was to behold Albert was altered perforce. He found on observation the affection between the orphans so complete, that it was impossible for him to be present with the one without being in company with the other; and though Albert's want of hearing prevented his joining to any great extent in the conversation, he was still sufficiently one of the party to require the notice of the count, and to claim his attention as long as he would stand well with Madeline. The events that subsequently took place, and which have been already noticed, again changed the count's feelings towards the youth. He was no longer a neutrality, or, if so, it was an armed one; and there was reason every moment to dread that he would break out into open war.

Here then was an abundance of reason for De Mara to do his utmost to wean Madeline from her affection for her brother; and as soon as he had instructed Deboos to take advantage of the kindness which existed between her and Albert, in order that there might be something of a check even on that side, the count set himself seriously to work at his task, in the confident expectation that a very short time would be sufficient to effect his project in all its parts.

In the first two or three instances he succeeded as well as he could wish. Fortune seemed to work with him, and make excuses for him; and he felt that in proportion as he and Madeline were alone, his suit proceeded with renovated ardour. Crowned with success, he became more emboldened; and seizing the opportunity of Madame Lalande one evening declaring herself too unwell to join a party that had been agreed upon for the theatre,

he ventured to propose that he and Madeline should proceed thither, and that Albert should stay behind as a companion for the invalid.

This arrangement was objected to on the part of Madeline, who declared that as Madame Lalande required a companion, she would stay with her; and that the count and Albert should proceed to the theatre together, the representation that evening being one which the latter had long desired to see, as it was the revival of a piece which had been much talked of throughout Switzerland, and which, as it was to be acted entirely in pantomime, would easily come within the scope of his apprehension.

This decision placed both Deboos and De Mara on the horns of a dilemma. Deboos, knowing that the count would be glad to have her say that she wished Albert to remain behind, did not dare express it, lest it might confirm Madeline still more peremptorily in her decision; while the count was awakened out of the delicious reverie he had been enjoying at the idea of spending a whole evening with Madeline alone, to find the very person, whom of all others he dreaded and detested, foisted upon him instead: nor did he know how to demur to this arrangement of his mistress, without throwing himself open to suspicion on the one hand or the other.

Madeline saw the hesitation with which he was wavering, and forced an explanation upon him, by exclaiming, "Are we going to have two invalids, count? or has the loss of two ladies at once so overwhelmed you as to take away all power of utterance?"

"And is it not such a loss," replied the lover, "sufficient to account for the effect produced? I had hoped that by this time my young friend Albert knew enough of Madame Lalande's constitution to be the proper person to undertake her cure, without requiring a consultation of physicians to help him through his diagnosis."

"But it was not a consultation of physicians that is proposed; only to substitute one for another. Come, count, Albert is quite ready; and I long to have my patient all to myself."

"Nay, but if you insist on turning physician, my good Madeline," cried Madame Lalande, "the count has a fair right to insist on turning patient. Come, let us put off the threatre for to-night, and unite in being sick."

De Mara gave the proposer of this scheme a look, as much as to say—"That is not the footing on which I would have the thing placed;" and then remarked, "I cannot be sick at will; nor, if I could, should this be the opportunity I would take, for I should find it but a poor substitute for the pleasure that was to have been mine. Come, dear Madeline, think better of it, and do not cheat Madame Lalande of her faithful nurse."

"I am sure," said the maiden, thus appealed to, "that if I imagined for a moment that my dear madame would be dissatisfied with the change, I would cease to press it; but I long for an opportunity of showing her how well I can rival even Albert in that capacity. And look at the boy; see, he has not yet caught from our countenances the subject of our conversation, so that his own face is still lighted up with the anticipated pleasure of seeing something that he will be able to comprehend throughout. So, good count, be obedient to your faith as a *preux chevalier*, and wish us 'good night.'"

"But a *preux chavalier's* duty," replied De Mara, still seeking to contest the point, "is to attend on the ladies; and, if you insist on this arrangement, you will not only deprive me, but Albert, of all claim to the character. Come, let me rule this evening, and your brother shall be gratified another night."

"Now, if I did not know you love argument for argument-sake," said Madeline, somewhat seriously, "I should feel hurt at your still opposing me. But as I have no doubt you have a good chain of reasoning to urge in defence, I will be content to meet you half-way."

"My best Madeline," cried her lover, his brow clearing up, and gaiety again sparkling in his eye, "I am sure you would comply."

"In all that is reasonable, you would say. Just so; so let this be the arrangement: go now with Albert to the theatre, and to-morrow morning, I promise to hear your arguments, pro and con, with the patience of a burgomaster and the deliberation of a congress of statesmen."

De Mara's countenance fell into gloom as rapidly as it had risen into gladness. "Your decision," said he, "puts me in mind of the way in which an old English poet opens one of his shorter pieces:—

I oft have heard of Lydford law,
How in the morn they hang and draw,
And sit in judgment after.

Or, perhaps it may more fairly be likened to the judge who always quarrelled with those who had any thing to say in their defence, because it served to confound the clearness of the charge."

"Sir," said Madeline—"but I see how it is. Your inclinations and my wishes must come in opposition only for the latter to yield; and I thank you for the lesson."

"That is unjust, Madeline. Your pleasure is mine. But it would seem beyond all fairness to require me to assume the office of leading-strings to Albert, for whom I am as little a companion as he is one for me."

"Then I am to understand that you refuse your companionship to Albert this evening at the theatre?"

"I do not refuse it," said De Mara, afraid, from Madeline's manner, that he had gone too far, "but I complain of the arrangement; and, indeed, I am afraid that it is now too late for any of us to go, for it is already half an hour beyond the time of commencement."

"Count de Mara," said the girl, with a firmness which had been little expected, "it is well that you should understand me rightly. Albert is as myself: he, for whom the boy is no companion, can be no friend of mine. I have the honour of wishing you good night."

Both Deboos and the Count gazed on the speaker with astonishment. The former sighed deeply, as she might do, who had been unexpectedly reminded of the foregone scenes of pain and pleasure that belonged to her own history. The latter looked on in silence for a few moments, during which a myriad of passions, and grades of passions, traversed his course of thought.

At length he broke silence. "Dear Madeline, why such words as these? Is it forbidden me to speak of sympathies being wanting, as well as sympathies in existence? Is it denied me—"

"Pray, no more, Count de Mara: I know the subtlety of your tongue; and doubt not you have wisdom enough to silence a simple villager. But even such skill as yours cannot throw a coat of darkness over my heart. Merciful Heaven! have I been in danger of learning to think well of him who would teach me to think ill of my Albert? Poor boy!" added she, as she pressed him to her bosom, "where are your miseries of my infliction to end? Is it not enough that my fault forbids your looking back at your mother's memory, lest you should remember my error? Is it not enough that I have torn you asunder from the kindest protector that Heaven ever sent to throw a shield over your hapless fate, but must I also be the tempter of companions to flout at you?—Must I be the summoner of associates who hold up their hands in contempt of you? Count de Mara, I entreat you to quit us. Speak to him, good Madame Lalande. Tell this despiser of my brother that he has no right to hold the mirror to my guilty conscience, and inflict wretchedness on me by showing me my offences."

De Mara, accustomed as he was to the ways of women, could not withstand the earnestness of these exclamations; still less could he resist the varying expression of her countenance, now streaming with tenderness towards her brother, and presently blackening into anger towards him who had provoked this scene. With hesitation, with reluctance, lingering in each step that carried him to the door, he withdrew.

The feelings that accompanied him to his hotel were nearly beyond endurance, and seemed as though they would fritter his very heart into shreds. He cursed his own folly—he cursed Deboos' sickness—he cursed Albert's very existence—he cursed Madeline in her obstinacy and resistance. Now, for the first time, he really began to form a just conception of her fiery temperament, and well understood how it was that her uncle had been offended past forgiveness. But when he looked at the situation in which he found himself, then it was that his bosom swelled with the deepest pang, and his heart heaved highest within his breast. For nearly a month had he been incessantly at work in obtaining Madeline's affections; and now, in one short hour, he had more than undone all that was done before. He had deserted all other objects of pursuit—had been laughed at by his boon companions for his slow pertinacity—and, at last, with a breath—a word—a look, found himself excluded from all hope, and banished from the very presence of his mistress.

While the count was thus running the round of his prospects destroyed, his battle was being fought in the field he had just quitted by an ally that he had little expected. As soon as he had departed, the maiden, with high indignation in her actions, made Albert acquainted with what had taken place. It cannot be denied that the first sensation that presented itself to the youth's mind on receiving this information was that of pleasure. The count, whom he had never liked, and towards whom he had lately begun to entertain a stronger feeling of disapprobation, was disbanded; and never again was his dear Madeline to be taken away from her brother, to whose sight she was dear as that of Jerusalem was of yore to the enthusiastic lunatics who crusaded away life, riches, and common sense at the bidding of a Boniface or a Pius, whose grasping spirits could not rest till they should be able to place one foot as firmly in Asia, as they had implanted the other in Europe. But when Albert took cognisance of all the consequences that would attend this change, this first sensation of his mind gradually gave way to another. Young as he was, and shut out as he had been by his misfortune from a knowledge of the world and of the world's significances, he had not failed to perceive the growing pleasure that his sister had taken in the society of De Mara; and though her heat of temper prevented her, on the spur of the moment, displaying the slightest reluctance at the decision she had made, Albert felt, from his own experience, how difficult and how painful it was to be separated from an associate, who, on the score of kindness, attention, and the desire to please, claimed affinity to those feelings in another's breast. Before the strength of this image his own prejudice against the count rapidly disappeared; and he used all his powers of persuasion to induce Madeline to alter her determination.

It was long before the sister would yield: at first the very fact of Albert's pleading on behalf of the nobleman's contumacy strengthened her determination; but, as he pleaded, she gradually softened before the bland words of the youth, and at length, assisted by skilful inuendoes judiciously thrown in and supported by the supposed Madame Lalande, who from her fictitious character claimed a weight for her advice, which it could not otherwise have had, Albert was triumphant.

Nor would he rest here. Forgiveness being agreed upon, he contended that there was neither candour nor justice in suppressing its announce-

ment; and, insisting upon his sister writing her relaxation to the count, Albert himself claimed the privilege of conveying it forthwith to his lodgings; hoping, in the honesty of his heart, that the share he had had in effecting the reconciliation, together with his appearance in the happy character of a messenger of peace, would obliterate old feelings in De Mara's breast, and give them both an opportunity of improving their opinion of each other.

When Albert arrived at the count's hotel, he used the privilege which he deemed to be belonging to the errand on which he had come, and entered his apartment without announcement. When he first cast his eyes on De Mara, there was an involuntary shudder at the change which had taken place in his countenance: the first lines of beauty, which usually had possession of his face, were distorted, or rather they had evaporated in the boiling of the passions that had there set up his abode; while his features had taken on themselves an expression of ghastliness, as if they had been made haggard by a series of painful exertions.

When De Mara looked up and saw who it was that thus intruded on his privacy—none other than his bane, and the very author of all his disappointments—the devil was strong within him; and it was as though he had to employ the power of a thousand minds to suppress the thoughts that flowed thick and fast into his brain.

The struggle was soon put an end to by Albert giving him the letter from his sister; and it was well that it was so; for such thoughts as those do not long hold dominion over the human mind without converting the possessor from a man into a demon.

With a strange agitation De Mara tore open the missive. With a still more wondrous sensation he found its contents to be—

"If the Count de Mara can forget the painful occurrence of this evening, Madeline will endeavour to copy his example. Friendships, she is told, are too hardly won to be lightly cast away; and she acknowledges the many goodnesses of the count, whom she will not bid alter his opinion of poor Albert, but only thank him for having taught his sister to say that she is again willing to meet De Mara as a friend."

He, to whom these few lines were addressed, felt the full force of the hint with which the note concluded, and in the revulsion of his sentiments could not help embracing the messenger who had brought him such glad tidings. Albert hailed this action as the forerunner of what he had presaged, and warmly returned the pressure.

In a short time they were both again in the presence of Madeline, whom they found alone, Deboos having taken her leave for the night. To pursue the scene of their reconciliation further will only be to repeat a tale that has been told a thousand times by painter, poet, and novelist. Let it be mentioned, however, that the count did not this time forget his tactics; but, remembering the wily dogma of the Latin poet—that "the quarrels of lovers are the renewal of love," he embraced the moment of returning softness in Madeline's bosom to make a formal declaration of his passion for her, and to obtain from her those bashful admissions which are as characteristic of the one sex, as a manly avowal of the heart's dearest wish is of the other.

Albert heard not; but he read in their eyes the subject that lighted them so brilliantly, and became the mute confidant of their situation. For the first time in his life, he felt his heart warm into affection towards the count, and began to entertain a hope that the mutual sentiment between them, that had commenced so ominously, might turn to better account in the end, and promote a hopeful cordiality of feeling.

CHAPTER XIII.

Guisc. Oh piteous and horrid murder!
Beaup. Such a life
Methinks had metal in it to survive
An age of men.
Henry. Such often soonest die.
CHAPMAN'S BUSSY D'AMBOIS.

THE Count de Mara's reflections, when he returned to his own lodgings that night, were not of the most agreeable nature. It was true that his misunderstanding with Madeline had been cleared up; but there was still enough, both in its commencement and termination, to disagree with the prospects he had hitherto been entertaining. Up to this period, though the count had done full justice to the vivacity of disposition and rapidity of temper which Madeline possessed, in other respects he had deemed her to be one of the sex, as it had come under his survey and conclusions; and he had consequently made up his mind that he was to enjoy with respect to her a similar success to that which had crowned his machinations on previous occasions.

But the adventures of the evening had thrown fresh light on his undertaking; and he could not help perceiving that success—of which ultimately he did not choose to doubt—was further off than he had imagined; and that considerable time was still necessary to carry his designs into effect. It was this that caused his chief uneasiness, for, independently of his own eagerness and impatience, he felt that he was in no condition to spare more time to the enterprise without entangling himself in dangers which he wished to avoid. The period for the return of the real Madame Lalande was fast approaching; it was impossible to tell from day to day how long Seaton's humour of absence would last; and it was quite clear that the appearance of either of these persons would be the signal of his own defeat; for the specimen of that night was sufficient to show that whatever love Madeline might have for him, there were other passions within her breast, which, when excited, were sufficient to make that love succumb. This last thought brought back his mind to Albert with redoubled force. The heat of re-action, or rather the unexpected situation which had prevailed for a moment, had warmed him towards the youth. But the sensation was a forced one; and when with a worldly and a cunning eye he surveyed the whole bearings of the case, his heart soon chilled towards him again, and his former disgust at his presence—at his very existence, revived. Albert, as he considered him, was the most dangerous enemy he had to encounter—the rock, of all others, to be dreaded in piloting this difficult voyage.

The only resource, then, that he had left was to endeavour to vary his plan so as to meet the exigencies of the case. Long did he debate this point within himself, and many were the suggestions that his fertile mind afforded; but they all seemed to be of a vague and unsatisfactory nature, for each in its turn was dismissed with the conviction that it was inefficient for the purpose required. At length the thought struck him, how far it might be expedient to tempt Madeline, or even to carry her off from Geneva to some place where he should not be surrounded with such dangerous chances, and where he might be more at liberty to prosecute his plans with safety.

The idea of tempting her to such a place, however, was soon abandoned; for with all his invention he could not devise any feasible ground that should induce her to quit Geneva; and even, should he succeed in this, he could not hope that she would depart without having Albert as a companion, so that all his trouble and skill would be spent in furthering a plan which would still leave his chief enemy in possession of the fortress. The remainder of the scheme, however, seemed better suited to his purpose, and the only doubt he had about it was whether Madeline could be induced to forgive this first step, so as to afford him a fair opportunity of employing all his arts of address in those which were to succeed. At all events the business was worth consideration. By staying where he was risks of the most dangerous nature were hazarded:—by going elsewhere, and carrying Madeline with him, he opened the door to the chance of her displeasure on one point only; besides which, he flattered himself that by employing Deboos (as Madame Lalande) judiciously to exculpate the step when taken, he should be able to baffle any extraordinary display of feeling on the part of his mistress.

Having thus, at length, determined on the plan that he would pursue, the count betook himself to his couch; but his mind was still too full of the "shreds and patches" of plots and schemes to allow his body the repose of sleep. But, though wakeful and restless, the hours did not pass tediously. No moment elapsed without a scene being present to his mind, in which he felt all the deep interest of a principal actor. Madeline, Albert, Deboos, Seaton, and Lalande passed in quick succession over the mirror of his brain, and like the multifarious presentations of the kaleidoscope offered a continual change of circumstance and situation—himself always figuring as the director and prime mover of the whole panorama.

As day was about to break, the count fell into a heavy slumber, induced by the fatigue and anxiety of the hours he had passed; and the lateness of the hour at which he awoke prevented him that morning prosecuting a scheme which had formed part of the determinations of the night. It had been his intention, in pursuance of those determinations, to be with Deboos sufficiently early to anticipate her visit to Madeline, in order that he might arrange with that agent the necessary steps for conveying the maiden from Geneva. This opportunity, however, being lost, he determined to avail himself of the first moment he could be alone with Deboos, as he felt that, his scheme once resolved upon, he could not be too speedy in putting it in execution.

That moment for which he looked was the one when the fictitious Madame Lalande rose to take leave of the orphans after spending the day, as usual with them. On her offering to go, De Mara volunteered his company; and though such a suggestion on his part was not of very frequent recurrence, she had too well learned her cue to fall into any arrangement he made to express any surprise at the proposal, and they accordingly quitted the house together.

But whatever her surprise might be at this offer, it was infinitely surpassed and overwhelmed by the proposal which he had to make. That proposal was one which she had never contemplated; and still more, it was one with which, in her present state of feeling towards the orphans, she could never comply. Albert's affection for her had not only instilled the same sensation into her mind with respect to him, but with respect to Madeline also; for she saw how intimate was the association between them, and felt that, in showing regard to the sister, she was offering the most grateful homage to the brother.

When, therefore, the count gave her to understand what his intentions were, she felt an inexpressible shock. As yet her thoughts had not taken any express form, but had been content to dwell with kindness on the

image of the orphans, with a sort of vague hope that the count might be so far interested in the charms of Madeline, and withheld by her prudence of conduct, as to seriously entertain a wish to be united to her in marriage. But this unexpected declaration of De Mara entirely overturned any dreams of that sort, with which she might have been soothing her expectation; and she found herself called upon to assist in a scheme, the whole spirit of which was contrary to her inclinations and desires.

Long and anxious was the conversation that took place between these two on the subject; and the point which the count had expected would have been settled before they reached Deboos' house, occupied them some hours after they had entered her abode. The female had no wish to come to open war with the nobleman, and was therefore careful how she expressed her feelings, while De Mara, anxious to have the coadjutorship of a person who had so much influence with Madeline in her assumed character, explained himself to the full, and endeavoured to combat and subdue every objection that she raised to the plan he was proposing. Gradually, however, the tone of the conversation changed:—Deboos began to perceive that her employer was inexorably attached to his schemes, and that the hopes she had entertained of an honourable proposal being made to Madeline were nugatory;—while the other discovered that there was something in Deboos' opposition that he could not fathom, but which was evidently running counter to the project which he had instituted.

A detail of the latter part of their discussion will show the humour in which they parted for the night.

"Come, Deboos," said the count, in answer to a renewed argument on her part to show the injudiciousness of his proposed mode of proceeding: "Come, madame, be candid with me, and let me really know how the case stands. I have marked your words for some time, and am convinced that there are reasons behind the curtain, which you have not yet chosen to disclose to me."

"There are no reasons," replied Deboos, "in my mind, but those which have reference to your own benefit: and my own I hold to be included in yours. I cannot comprehend how I, as Madame Lalande, am to justify a proceeding to Madeline, which even, as Madame Deboos, I cannot defend to you."

"There lies the point I want to know;—what has made Madame Deboos so amazingly nice all at once?—Is it a visitation—or a recantation—or a hallucination that has come over her since yesterday?"

"Nothing has come over me since yesterday," replied the female, growing warm, "but the news of your prodigious plot; so that, whether it be visitation, recantation, or hallucination, the provision is of your own importing."

"Ah!" cried the other, "is my antagonist getting to her smart sayings and quibbling positions? Then now I am sure that there is a mystery which you would not have me comprehend; for it is an old manœuvre of yours to attack the temper when the penetration is a little too keen. It was the way, I remember, in which Altoz used to become your victim; but I intend to act on a safer system, and therefore beg leave to return to the subject from which you would divert me."

Deboos was about to reply in no very conciliatory tone, when a loud knock at the outer door arrested her speech, and her attitude was on the instant changed into that of a person listening with the most undivided attention. The count watched her motions with interest, arising not only from the situation of the moment, but because he felt curious as to the actions of a being whose motives he had never been able to construe or penetrate.

After the lapse of a minute in this state of suspense, Deboos' only servant

entered the room, and stated that there was one at the door who wanted to speak with her mistress.

The mistress, in a hasty tone, exclaimed—"Do you know his ——?" and then, interrupting herself, added—"Never mind: at all events show him into the upper room. Do you understand, Maud? Up stairs, and by no means into the adjoining apartment."

The girl nodded, in confirmation of the directions she had received, and withdrew to obey them.

"I perceive," said the count, with a smile, "that it is time for me to withdraw. Give me a positive answer, and I will take the hint."

"There is no hint for your going," replied Deboos, with a forced composure, "except the hour of night. That, indeed, might tell you that it is too late to stay."

"Too late to stay—but seemingly not too late to arrive. However, that is your affair, and not mine: I wait only for my answer."

"I can give no other answer than that already spoken. I would have you think better of this device; for, depend on it, the day that you carry it into execution will be the day of your losing Madeline for ever. I have a woman's wit, and I have watched the girl's character with a woman's eye; and my firm conviction is, that she would never pardon such an act."

"All which means, I suppose," returned De Mara, "that I am no longer to have your assistance in my enterprise."

"It means no such thing," said the other. "I have received your money, and would be honest to my word. That money was given me to forward your cause; and I cannot, therefore, do that which appears to me calculated to ruin it."

"But what if I insist on your compliance with my plan?"

"That cannot alter the position in which we stand. I have sold you my time and my abilities, but I have not sold you my judgment."

"I understand you," cried the count; "you would make a parade of your conscience; and, after all, end each sentence in violation of your plighted word. But it may happen, madam, that I shall find means to bring you to another mode of acting."

And on this the count, with anger in his movements, caught up his hat, and flung himself out of the house.

This was with De Mara another night devoted to wayward and unpleasing reflections. On the previous night he had dedicated his whole powers of argument to persuade himself that he had devised a plan—the best that the circumstances of the case would permit; and now, when he had imagined that he was just about to give full effect to his machinations, the whole was stopped by the defection of his principal instrument. Deboos, who had ever been a mystery to him, had now become something utterly incomprehensible. He called over to his recollection all the actions of her life with which he was acquainted; but still he could find no loop-hole by which a light was thrown in to illumine the ambiguity of her behaviour. As far as he could make out, there seemed to be some mystic personage in the background, who had influence over her determinations, and was the prime mover of her actions. The count recalled to his memory the strange expression of her countenance on the night of his first visit to her on Madeline's account—the manner in which she undertook to find an agent who should procure the absence of Madame Lalande—the anonymous letter—her own dark and distant hints on the subject—and, finally, this strange visit to her at midnight, which she seemed to know how to deal with, and equally determined to keep secret and unacknowledged. The reviewing of all these various circumstances, which, though slight in themselves, formed altogether a somewhat important whole, convinced De

Mara that his conclusion was right, and that his only chance of making Deboos conform with his wishes was to penetrate the enigma in which she was enwrapt.

With this resolution he retired to rest; but the news that the next morning brought him again broke down all the plans that the previous night had fostered and matured, and drove him once again into the sea of uncertainty and doubt, more unpiloted than ever.

He had scarcely risen from his bed when Deboos' servant burst into the room, her eye aghast with horror, and her whole manner depicting the fear that possessed her mind.

De Mara gazed at her in silent astonishment, and waited to hear tidings in conformity with her aspect. But she spoke not: it was as though terror had laid its icy influence on all the wonted channels of utterance, and forbade the issue of her voice.

At length he exclaimed, "What now, Maud?—What has happened?"

The woman caught, as it were, the power of speech from her questioner. "She is dead!" was her answer; and then, as if these words had conjured some painful vision to her sight, she covered her face with her hands as she again muttered convulsively to herself, "She is dead! She is dead!"

De Mara was almost as much aghast as the poor servant at the information; and it was some time before he could demand a fuller explanation of her brief announcement.

As the death of Deboos, in the course of a few days, became the subject of a legal investigation before the magistrates of the city, it is not necessary to recount the conversation that took place between the nobleman and the servant of the deceased. One word as to the situation in which the former found himself placed by this unexpected occurrence, and we will pass on to the evidence detailed before the syndics of Geneva.

The whole of the count's plans were so identified with Deboos, that, on his first consideration of the consequences of her decease, it almost appeared as if the plot was entirely ruined by her disappearance from the scene of action. De Mara keenly appreciated the difficulty he had in handling her character and disposition, so as to make them available to his purposes; but at the same time he had been so much accustomed, during the last month, to act in concert with her, that he could not divest himself of his belief in the necessity of her presence.

There is a story of a hypochondriac who imagined that he ever had a wraith, or thing unearthly by his side; and, under the influence of this imagining, his body wasted, and his spirit pined. At length some leech, wiser than the rest of his brethren, despatched this troublesome companion for ever; and it was thought the matter was concluded—quite the reverse; for when the poor patient found that his companion had quitted its long-accustomed station, he felt that a gap had been made in his circle, and he fell to moaning and lamenting for the loss of his troublesome but necessary ally.

The first feelings of the count were somewhat similar to those of the poor hypochondriac. Little was the comfort *his* wraith had been to him, but still he winced under the gap her destruction had occasioned, and he felt as if his labour had become doubly onerous on the loss of such a coadjutrix. The presence of the supposed Madame Lalande, and the patronage which she afforded to his attentions towards Madeline, had been a sort of security against any error into which he might be led; but now that she was gone, he felt a double caution was necessary, a more than usual discretion to be exercised to prevent those accidents which her presence would have reduced into trifles, but which, without her, might assume the character of importance.

But, concerning the death of Madame Deboos, I have the more willingly

omitted the girl's statement of the circumstances to the Count de Mara on the morning of her death, as I have been fortunate enough to procure the secret and official record of the proceedings taken in the case before the syndics of Geneva, and shall be able to extract, for the information of the reader, such parts as are necessary to invest him with the more important features of the evidence adduced on that occasion.

My extracts commence thus:—

Count Richard Felix Mirabel de Mara, aged twenty-nine, sworn: "On the evening of the death of Madame Deboos I was at her house; and, while in the course of conversation with her, I heard a loud knock at the street-door. After the lapse of a minute, her servant-maid, whose name I believe to be Maud Rinvein, entered the room where the deceased and I were seated, and announced that a person was without, asking for her mistress. The deceased directed the servant to show the inquirer into a room, which room I forget, but I particularly remember her laying a stress upon his not being shown into the back-room on the same floor with us; and I also observed that, till we heard the footsteps of the stranger and the servant overhead, the deceased broke off all conversation with me, from which my conclusion was that she was desirous either that he should not know that she had any one with her, or that no part of our conversation should reach his ears. From the moment of our renewing the conversation, I perceived an uneasiness about her manner, which I easily interpreted into a desire that I should take my leave, which I accordingly did after a stay of a very few minutes beyond the arrival of the stranger."

Paul Luther Carwin, aged seventy-one, sworn:—"I occupy the next house to the deceased. On the night of her death I was in bed by ten o'clock, but awake almost the whole of the night, being afflicted with severe rheumatic pains, which greatly disturbed my rest. About two o'clock in the morning, as I should guess, a disturbed movement in the house of the deceased attracted my attention, but I could not make out its particular character. As I conjecture, I should say that it resembled the convulsive and resisting heaving of a person in bed; but this opinion may be partly formed from since learning the way in which the body of the deceased was found. About five minutes after this I heard one of the street-doors in the street clap to, but of which house I cannot take on myself to say."

By a syndic: "How came it, that on hearing the noise you have described, you did not give an alarm?"—"The noise was not much—a rumbling rather than a defined sound; besides which I had been in the habit of hearing strange sounds in the house of the deceased. Persons have come there late at night; and I remember, about a month ago, two cavaliers coming to the house about two or three in the morning, and knocking most violently for several minutes, after which they were admitted. That very night too another person had been admitted about an hour before."——

[I think it may fairly be inferred, though no minute is made of it in the secret and official document from which I quote, that at this point of evidence Count Richard Felix Mirabel De Mara bit his lips, and somewhat hastily turned his back on the witness; for assuredly his lordship must have had a shrewd guess as to who the two cavaliers were that had paid so late a visit to Deboos.]

Maud Rinvein, aged nineteen, sworn:—[It would appear that the whole of this witness's testimony was thought of great importance, for all her evidence is detailed in question and answer.]

"In what capacity did you live with the deceased?"—"I was her maid-servant, and the only one she kept."

"Do you mean by that, that yourself and the deceased were the only inmates of the house?"—"Yes."

"At what hour was it that the unknown stranger, who now lies under suspicion, came to the house?"—"We have no clock in the house, but it must have been shortly after midnight."

"Did you open the door to him?"—"I did."

"Describe, as well as you can, how he was dressed?"—"His person was almost entirely covered with a large cloak, so that I could only see his hat and his boots, which were of the kind usually worn by the lower order of the Genevese. The colour of his cloak was brown."

"What did he say was his business?"—"He said that he wanted to see 'Deboos.' I remember particularly his not putting 'Madame' before her name, for I thought it very uncivil, and answered him accordingly."

"Relate the rest of the conversation that took place."—"When he asked for my mistress so uncivilly, I told him that if he meant 'Madame Deboos,' she was too much engaged to be seen by every bear that growled at the door. And then he laughed so deeply, and so strangely, I should know that laugh again if I heard it on my dying bed. After this laugh was over, he put out his hand from under his cloak—and a very dirty hand it was—and said 'Harky'e, Goody, if you do not convey my errand, neck and heels you go into the street, and I shall do my own message.' And when I looked at him, there was something in his manner—for I could not see enough of his face to tell what that indicated—that made me feel that word and deed were quick followers with him. So I said, 'Well, well, good man,' (God forgive me for calling such a monster so) 'I will go tell my mistress;' and I did so, for I thought she would be little pleased to have such a third person in her conversation with the Count De Mara."

"And you informed her accordingly?"—"I did; and my mistress bade me show the stranger into the upper room, but by no means into the adjoining apartment."

"Do you know any reason why she did not wish the man to go into the adjoining apartment?"—"None, unless that given by the Count De Mara may be deemed sufficient."

"Did any further conversation take place between you and the stranger?"—"I merely told him that my mistress had directed me to show him up stairs, on which he followed me, and I left him with a candle, as soon as I pointed out to him the apartment in which he was to remain."

"What occurred next?"—"In a few minutes I heard the Count De Mara take his leave; after which my mistress called to me, and told me to go to bed."

"In what part of the house was your bed-room?"—"For the last three weeks I have been sleeping in the kitchen, which is a sort of out-house detached from the rest of the building, adjoining another where my mistress used to keep lumber; but, previously, I had always slept in the room on the same floor with my mistress, which was up stairs: it was into my former bed-room that I showed the stranger."

"Did you hear your mistress go up stairs?"—"She went up as soon as she saw me retire to the kitchen for the purpose of going to bed."

"What further do you know about the events of the night?"—"While I was undressing for bed, I could not help thinking about the stranger that was up stairs with my mistress. I had never seen him before, but still it struck me that he had been in the house on more than one occasion."

"What reason had you for coming to this conclusion?"—"About a month ago my mistress was unwell, and very late at night she sent me out to get her some laudanum, which she said always relieved her pain. This was between one and two in the morning; and it was a long time before I could procure what she wanted. When I returned she let me in on my knocking, and took the bottle from me, desiring me to go to bed directly. That night I certainly thought I heard voices in the house; but should perhaps have

forgotten all about it, had not old Master Carwin, who lives next door, asked me the next morning who it was that had been knocking so loud at our door; and from his account I learned, that first one man in a cloak, and then two cavaliers on horseback, had been to the house while I was away. And since that night some one has come to the house several times—as often as three or four times—and he always announced his being at the door by a peculiar knock, which my mistress, on hearing, answered herself. The stranger, of whom I have been speaking, came with the same knock, and I have no doubt that it was only owing to my mistress being engaged with the count De Mara that she suffered me to open the door."

"Having explained this, be so good as to return to the further particulars of the night in question."—"The more I thought about the stranger up stairs, the more mysterious he appeared; and, as my curiosity was excited, I determined to creep up quietly, and listen to what they were talking about. To my great surprise, I found that the stranger was no longer in the room into which I had shown him, for I heard his voice, and that of my mistress, proceeding from her own bed-room, which was the furthest room of the two from the kitchen where I slept. As soon as I got my head level with the landing-place, I laid it along the boards, so as to get my ear as near to the crevice between the door and the floor as I could."

"And now tell us what you overheard; and be careful to preserve the words as accurately as your memory will serve."—"The first I heard was the stranger saying something which ended with 'Then he was in the house when I came?' My mistress replied, but the answer was in too low a tone for me to form any connexion between the few words I caught. The next sentence of the stranger I heard entire: it was, 'Mark this, little Deboos; I will myself seek an interview with him.' This seemed to make my mistress angry, for she raised her voice, and I could hear her say, 'Beware how you take such a step,' and then the sound fell again; but I think what she added was to the purport that sooner than that she would disclose all, which I heard her continue with the words, 'though I myself should sink beneath the ruins.'"

"Did you overhear your mistress call the stranger by any name; or have you any reason to conjecture what his name may be?"—"Not the slightest. My mistress never alluded to his visits in her conversation with me; and I certainly heard nothing that could inform me on that point."

"Did you hear nothing further?"—"Nothing; for my position was very uncomfortable; besides which, the thought struck me, that if I stepped on the landing, and looked through the key-hole, I might perhaps be able to see what they were about, as well as hear better."

"And did you not do so?"—"I attempted it; but in so doing trod unawares on a brush that was lying on the floor:—the consequence was, that the bristles of the brush gave way beneath my weight, and the handle, which was round, gave a sudden turn, by which I was thrown with some violence against the door. In a moment my mistress opened it, and, I suppose, guessed the whole, for she looked fearfully angry; though perhaps that might not have been altogether at me. She, however, ordered me down stairs—accompanied me—and, without saying another word, waited in the kitchen till I was undressed and in bed."

"What further do you know of this melancholy transaction?"—"I was too much frightened to think of going up stairs again, but I lay and listened with unmoved attention, till at length, almost without knowing it, I fell asleep."

"Then you heard nothing more that night?"—"There is a thing I should like to mention; but I beg it may be taken with a doubt. The next morning when I awoke and remembered what had been happening the previous night, there was an impression on my mind that my ear had traced a gurg-

ling muffled sound, as a conclusion to the events of the night. But I will not say that I really did hear it. One thing that almost makes me think it was dreamy and unreal, is, that when I shut my eyes as I lay in bed in the morning, the sound had more of reality about it to my imagination. Such as it was, however, I describe the sensation, but whether a fact or a dream I will not pronounce."

"At what hour in the morning did you get up?"—"A little after seven, which was later than usual; and therefore, when I was dressed and about, I was surprised to find that my mistress was not stirring, for she was generally up the first. I went to her door once or twice to listen, but there was no sound. Half an hour slipped away, and I began to think she would be angry if I did not call her; and yet I thought that the turmoil of the night might have wearied her. At length it came to my mind that I would go to her door and sing a little Italian air, which she herself had taught me, and which had often gladdened her face with a smile."

"And did you do so?"—"I was in no great heart for singing, for I knew that I had done wrong in listening at her door on the previous night, and I dreaded her unkind looks, for I knew that would be all the scolding I should have. Ah, she was a good mistress to me, and though her heart was heavy all day long, I never was made to bear the burthen of it. So at length I went and sang:—but she did not show by any movement that it reached her:—and then I opened the door softly to listen the better. Still no movement; not even a breath to break the silence:—it was so hush, that if it had not been for the daylight, I should have thought I had mistaken the hour. Next I stole my head into the room that I might see. I did see; and I thought it would go hard with me to draw another breath. Oh, the goodness, it was such a sight! She was stretched across the bed, clothed as the night before, and round her lay the bed-things, rumpled and tossed, as if a great struggle had been held upon them. But it was her face that took the gaze. Her eyes were wide open, and pushed forward, as though looking for him who had done this thing; and as I stood there aghast and without action, I almost thought that her lips moved, as if calling for revenge. Oh, sirs, she was a good mistress; and here was a sight!"

[At the conclusion of her evidence the witness, apparently overcome by her recollection of the scene, fainted, and was taken out of court.]

To be brief with this painful business. The rest of the document goes to show that a surgeon examined the body, and found on the throat marks of strangulation sufficient to show the way in which the poor creature was put to death: the impress of a finger and thumb on the neck were deeply visible, and had been so forcibly thrust into the flesh as to leave a portion of the dirt; which corroborated the statement of Maud Rinvein, when she said, "And a very dirty hand it was" that came from under the cloak. The whole of the police of Geneva, it also appeared, had been in motion to discover the supposed assassin; but though several were apprehended, there was nothing brought against any sufficient to fix the charge upon them.

From a memorandum inserted at the foot of the document, it would appear that on the conclusion of this evidence the court was cleared, and a consultation took place among the syndics as to the fit course to be pursued; and the following is the result:—"For the committal of Maud Rinvein to prison, 2: for her dismissal on recognisances for attendance from week to week to identify, should any be apprehended on suspicion, 7: on which (Count De Mara consenting to be bondsman for the said Maud Rinvein) all the witnesses were discharged from present attendance."

CHAPTER XIV.

An image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice.—Job.

Then after many tears and sorrows spent,
She dear besought the prince of remedy;
Who thereto did with ready will consent,
And well performed, as shall appear by his event.
The Faery Queene.

The first anxious task which the Count de Mara had to undergo was to break the information of Deboos' death to the Orphans, and to shape it in such a manner that they should not feel it necessary to ask for more particulars than he felt disposed to give; for he could not doubt that if Madeline's suspicions were once roused, there would be no pause in her activity till she should trace the fictitious Madame Lalande to be the hapless Madame Deboos, and thus probe one of the chief mysteries of De Mara's scheme.

The fear that this undesired event might happen instilled the proper requisite of horror into the subtle nobleman's countenance; so that when he waited on Madeline to acquaint her with the loss she had sustained, he was able, without doing violence to his nature, to dress out his face with the necessary habiliments of wo, and to subdue his tone to that melancholy cadence which is at once the companion and the indicator of a heavy heart.

The grief which the orphans felt at the announcement thus made by De Mara was real and unaffected; but the degree in which each entertained it differed. Madeline, though she had felt full respect for the character of one who had been her deceased mother's chosen friend, did not feel a loss that came home directly to her own bosom and left a blank in her heart. There were affection and respect and esteem in her sentiments towards Deboos, but sympathy for the most part was wanting. But to Albert the loss was that of a companion. The manner in which De Mara monopolized the attention of his sister had forced him upon Deboos till he had in a manner moulded her to a fashion of his own, and, loving her himself, compelled her to love him in return. The death of this female, therefore, was robbing Albert of a large portion of his little store of affections, and he felt it proportionally severely. He had long thought how happy he should be, could he find a friend awake to the motions of his soul: he met Deboos, and (right or wrong) conceived that in her that friend was found. No wonder, then, that he drooped at being deprived of a companion for whom he had long been eager, and who seemed to have been only bestowed to be taken away again at the moment that her value was just beginning to be appreciated.

As far as the count's apprehensions were concerned, however, the scene passed off to his heart's content. The story that he told was received with sorrow, but without suspicion; and it was readily acceded to his representations that the care of her funeral should be left to him to discharge. He explained that the suddenness of the disease (though he dropped no hint of the pregnant suspicions of foul play that appeared from the circumstances of her death) had placed the corpse in a manner within the scope of the law, and that it would therefore necessarily be unpleasant for the orphans to visit the remains of their late friend. De Mara's wisdom and prudence were acknowledged; and the whole arrangement was left in his hands, with many thanks for his friendly intervention.

This piece of good fortune was speedily followed by another, and De Mara began to think that the Fates were on his side, and fighting for him. One of the chief anxieties he had had, and that which had induced him to be so peremptory with Deboos for the removal of his mistress from Geneva, was his apprehension of the return of the real Madame Lalande from Genoa, and some unlucky coincidence bringing her and Madeline together. On the day on which he announced the death of Deboos to the orphans, however, he received a letter from a friend at Genoa, who had been employed to watch the motions of Madame Lalande, announcing that that lady had been seized by a dangerous fever—that her life was despaired of,—and that even in the event of her getting the better of the attack, it would leave her in such a weak state as to render her utterly unfit to undertake so long a journey as that from Genoa to Geneva for some months. This information was in the highest degree gratifying to the count, for it allowed him to abandon a scheme which he had always held to be dangerous, and which had become doubly so since the death of his coadjutrix; and he felt free to return to the prosecution of his former arrangements with redoubled energy and vigour.

But here, as before, he still found Albert to be his stumbling-block; and having, as he believed, disposed of all other difficulties in his way, he determined to set himself to work in right earnest to rid himself of this breaker a-head, that was perpetually thwarting the navigation of his bark of adventure.

As the time is now arrived when Albert's motions are to become a principal feature in the events that belong to this history of the Orphans of Unwalden, it may be as well to develope his character more particularly than heretofore, in order that the result which it produced may be more satisfactorily comprehended. It has been observed that Albert's virtues were rather of a passive than an active description—that there was more of endurance than execution about his character:—but this is to be understood with an exception. That he had more of the energy of patience, than of performance, is true; but it was from the peculiar circumstances of his life that this had taken its origin; and if he had never displayed more determined features of action, it was because the opportunity for their being evinced had never presented itself, and not that he was without their germs in the constitution of his mind. Hitherto he had been in years little more than a boy; and the faithful kindness and solicitude with which he had been tended by his mother and sister had rendered him still more helpless, or rather still less active on his own account than he would otherwise have been. But his mother—the prime originator and chief conductor of those tendernesses that had surrounded his walk through life, as the young sapling is swathed in moss to protect it from the adverse heavens—was dead; and his sister—the child of thoughtlessness, the wayward creature of a thousand hurricanes of passion—had unwillingly gradually weaned him from those placidities which enervated while they gratified. Since his arrival at Geneva he had taken his first lesson in thinking for himself. Self-taught, he was liable to form wrong judgments; but at all events he had advanced the first step towards plumbing the depths of human character; and taking the Count de Mara and the fictitious Madame Lalande for his ground-work, he had mapped out for himself a chart of the human mind.

Perhaps he might have stopped here; but the course of events pressed hard upon him, and forced him into the current, as in a mountain stream we sometimes see a floating fragment of wood that has been long snugly ensconced in the bay of an eddy, urged from its station, and driven into the whirl of waters by the unexpected accession of a diverted rivulet, which, after swooping in a bend of its own fashioning, returns its borrowed sources to the parent stream.

The first of these events was the death of Deboos. He had found a companion but to lose her; and again, after a temporary range, his mind was driven to sojourn with itself, and be its own keeper. For a few days it was able to bear its own company; but that capability quickly died away, and it grew weary of the solitary state in which it sat. The soul of Albert pined for an associate—ay, a thousand times more than it had ever pined before his companionship with Deboos had awakened it to the full sense of social enjoyment. He was somewhat in the state of Crusoe, who for four-and-twenty years submitted with a better grace to the solitary existence of his island life, than he could muster when after that lapse a wrecked ship showed him how near a prospect there had been of his having a mate;—in the language of that outcast from the world, he might have exclaimed—"Oh! that there had been but one or two, nay, or but one soul saved out of the ship, to have escaped to me, that I might but have one companion, one fellow-creature to have spoken to me, and to have conversed with!" While, in the words of Defoe, the historian of our poor Albert may moralize—"There are some secret moving springs in the affections; which, when they are set a-going by some object in view—or be it some object, though not in view, yet rendered present to the mind by the power of imagination—whose motion carries out the soul by its impetuosity to such violent eager embracings of the object, that the absence of it is insupportable."

The outward and visible signs of this movement of Albert's mind were in the first instance a sort of fitful reverie, that took possession of him for the first few days after De Mara's announcement to the orphans of the death of Deboos, but which after that period gradually developed itself in a wild uneasiness of manner, continually seeking the presence and observation of Madeline. As long as the first exhibition lasted, the count was well pleased with the consequences of the feeling produced by the death of Deboos: but when the first gave way to the second, and he found that it was restlessly impelling Albert to a demand on the attention of his sister, the nobleman began to see that if he would possess Madeline's society without the incumbrance of her brother, it was necessary to take immediate and peremptory steps to employ the youth in some new pursuit, that should distract his mind from its present determination. Not only was there in Albert's manner an immediate annoyance to his schemes, but, still worse, there was every reason to dread that if suffered to continue, it would speedily undergo another change, and assume a still more disagreeable importunity.

These points determining the count as to the course it was necessary for him to take, all that remained was to invent the means that should best enable him to give vigour and success to that course. Long did he deliberate on this subject, and various were the projects that suggested themselves to his fertile brain; and he fonnd full opportunity of appreciating the difficulties that occur to a man who undertakes to find employment for a being whom Nature has deprived of one of his most valuable rights.

While these thoughts were continually engaging the attention of De Mara, it happened that an eminent physician, who had made all Bologna resound with the wonder of his cures and the profoundness of his knowledge, came to sojourn for awhile at Geneva; and amongst his letters of introduction was one to the Signor Maravelli, with whom our reader has already formed an acquaintance at the road-side inn, and who since that event has been left to feast in unmentioned solitude on the wager that *ought* to have been paid to him by the count. It was at Maravelli's house that De Mara and the celebrated Doctor Valdi were introduced to one another.

It was not often that De Mara troubled this friend, or the others that formed his cortège on that day of his first introduction to Madeline, with a visit: his attendance on his mistress was too constant, and their boon com-

panion jests on his pursuit were too unwelcome, to induce him to present himself among them very frequently; nor would he have broken through his general feeling on this occasion, but that the same Genoese friend who had written to apprise him of the state of the real Madame Lalande had made him acquainted with the circumstance of Doctor Valdi having attended her during his stay in that city, and that it was to him chiefly that she owed the baffling of the fever so far as to save her life, though all his skill could not restore her to immediate health. When, therefore, the nobleman heard by chance from Altoz, with whom he still kept up a more constant intercourse than with the other members of his former knot of companions, that Valdi was a visiter at Maravelli's house, he felt a curiosity to have a personal interview with the physician, in order that he might learn from his own lips the probabilities as to the period of her entire recovery and her expected return to Geneva.

The introduction of Madame Lalande's name led Valdi into an account of the disease with which she had been attacked, and he was induced by the willing ear which his auditory lent to branch still farther out, and detail several curious cases that had come within his practice. He had just finished in a tone of honourable self-satisfaction the account of one extraordinary instance of the restoration of a person's sight by means of a novel invention of his own, when some one of the party observed, that from the pride which Doctor Valdi seemed to take in stating that cure, he presumed that it was the one which, even in the course of his long experience and success, had cost him most anxiety, and had afforded him most gratification.

"I cannot entirely admit that," said Valdi in reply: "as to the anxiety I experienced, you may perhaps be right; for no man, however skilful, can meddle with so delicate an organ as the eye without feeling a nervous solicitude, unless he be more or less than man. But of all the operations I ever undertook, that for which I felt the most triumph at my success, was one which I had to perform on a child that had been born deaf, and whose case had been under the consideration of the most eminent men of Paris."

The count started as if a sudden thought had been afforded to him by the speech of the professor, and, in conjunction with others of the company, expressed a desire to hear the particulars of the case.

"On examining my patient," said the physician, "I was soon convinced that the seat of his disease, or deprivation of sense, was situated deep in the defective organ, and that whatever operation I might undertake must be equally deep, and consequently endangering to the internal structure of the head. This was of course fully stated to the parents of the child, though I at the same time added, that if they thought it right to undergo a great risk for a great advantage, I would not shrink from the task. They were pleased after due deliberation to accept my offer, and I accordingly prepared myself for the operation. I will not trouble your unscientific ears with a tedious detail of the construction of the parts, or of the instruments I was in consequence led to invent, and use on the occasion. Certain it is that they cost me more thought and trouble than I had ever spent on any one case before in the whole course of my life: but they enabled me to perform my undertaking successfully, and the child is now living with its faculty of hearing completely restored--and so perfect, that I feel it to be no presumption, when I say that it will remain as long as any of the other natural functions of the patient may endure."

De Mara made no remark on what he had heard, but he did not think the less of it; and as he early withdrew from the party, it afforded his mind matter of debate for the rest of the evening. The more he considered the matter, the more it seemed to him that he had met with an expedient suited in the highest degree to his purpose. That Valdi's skill was sufficient to restore to Albert his lost sense of hearing he would not doubt; or

if he did, he intended to take care that no one else of the parties interested should have a scruple on that head; and then, if it should unfortunately happen that the operation proved fatal, why no one was to blame, and Albert's interference would be at an end more effectually than any other method could accomplish. On the other hand, supposing the operator turned out successful, and Albert as to his senses was made a perfect man, the best foresight the count could give to the change led him to believe that it would be the means of removing that portion of Albert's conduct which most annoyed him. It was true that a restored sense of hearing would act against his interests, so far as it would enable the youth to take part in future in any conversation De Mara might have with the orphans; but, on the opposite, it was to be hoped that the new and unexpected enjoyment which Albert would possess, would lead him to a greater range and scope than he had heretofore undertaken, and, by engaging him in fresh pursuits, relieve the lover and his mistress from that continual attendance on his part, which was a perpetual stumbling-block to the progress of the other. An additional motive with the count to recommend this undertaking to the orphans was, that though the subject of Albert's intrusion had had possession of his mind for days, he had not been able to suggest to himself a plan sufficiently feasible to get rid of the youth's observations without awakening the suspicions of the sister: so that this newly devised arrangement, independently of its own intrinsic recommendations, presented itself in the shape of a *dernière ressource*, beyond which all was uncertainty and dilemma.

The result of these self-deliberations of De Mara was, that on the following morning he broke his design both to the orphans and to the learned physician, who had suggested the first thought to his scheming mind.

With respect to the former party, his success was sufficient to carry him on in the hopes he had formed;—the chief opposition that he met with was from Albert himself. There must have been a strange sort of structure in the mind of the youth, for among all his reveries—and his day-dream list contained not a few—that of being blessed with hearing had never entered his imagination; and the time for proposing it to him was inopportune—not that he saw into the deep-concerted intention of its originator, but because since the decease of Deboos his mind had been so entirely occupied with picturing how he might again be "as infinite as all" to his sister, that he could not look with favour on any plan which, not appearing on its face to have any thing in it which should forward that idea, was in the comparison "blank as nothing." But whatever coldness Albert might on this account entertain towards the suggestion of De Mara was more than made up by the irresistible eagerness with which his sister entered into it. How often had she wept over the misfortune of her brother! How often had she deplored that Nature, bounteous in all other respects, had, as if in mockery of her own most excellent workmanship, suffered a flaw which blemished the whole structure! How often had she thought what worlds she would give—what sacrifices she would make—what joy unutterable she would feel, could some miracle (for nought else had ever presented itself to her uninstructed mind) render that structure perfect, and give her brother that enjoyment which she had felt when she heard the birds carol high in the vast cerulean, the solemn organ peal a heaven-taught symphony, or the voice of man discourse in tones such as struck the sense of hearing as the true music of the soul. To whatever, therefore, Albert objected, her answer was ready and overflowing. She conjured him by the love he had ever entertained towards her—by the memory of their dead mother, to whom she owed the duty of seeking for him every happiness and advantage—by the judgment to which he had ever ceded, and which had always been exercised with most care for his sake—by these and a thousand other

sisterly *aves* she conjured him to submit to this operation. She wept—she prayed—she smiled—she entreated—and she conquered.

When De Mara mentioned the subject to Dr. Valdi, the physician looked grave. It was true that he had once succeeded in this dangerous operation; and it was equally true, that his conscience and his heart led him to undertake all, however perilous, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. But his former patient was a child of eight or nine years of age, while this new subject for his skill had arrived at his seventeeth year; and it was a matter for serious consideration whether those fine parts, which could only be meddled with in a child under great peril and hazard, were not become, in an adolescent, so rigid and determined as to render the risk almost certainly fatal to life. De Mara, to whom these apprehensions were clearly stated, had gone too far, and succeeded too well with the more interested parties, to allow the professor's objections to go unanswered. He represented to him that points of difficulty, which ought to have great weight in a first attempt, were much palliated and subdued in the repetition of an operation: in the case of the first patient, it was a new and untried instrument that had to be taken in hand, which, however theoretically correct, naturally awakened in the operator's mind great anxiety as to the practical result. All that anxiety might now fairly be said to have evaporated; and, therefore, when the professor spoke of dangers and perils, it was worth considering whether he was not dealing with a case according to the impressions he had received in the first instance, without giving due allowance to the successful groundwork on which he had to build this second effort. At all events, on the physician's own principles of duty and risk-taking, he was bound to make the attempt, and it would be time enough to draw back from the undertaking when he found that the nature of the operation was actually leading him into danger, of which his acknowledged skill and judgment could not fail to apprise him before it was too late to recede.

I do not pretend to have set down all the arguments that were used, either on the one side or the other during this debate. It is sufficient to show, by the leading points, the spirit in which the matter was discussed, and then add the result—which was, that Dr. Valdi undertook to attempt the operation on the assurance of the count that all the difficulties and hazards of the thing should be fully explained to the patient.

This explanation De Mara willingly undertook to make; indeed, it was essential to him that all that had passed between the parties should take place through his intervention, and that the orphans should see as little of Valdi as possible; for De Mara was not without apprehensions that if any freedom of conversation took place between Madeline and the physician, the name of Lalande might possibly be mentioned; and, though it might easily be supposed that there was a Madame Lalande residing at Genoa, as well as the one residing at Geneva, he did not know so exactly how much Valdi knew of his Genoese patient's history as to be willing to risk such a mention of names unnecessarily; besides which in making Valdi's explanation to the orphans, the count took care to soften the improbabilities of the danger, and magnify those of the success, so as to leave the case pretty much in the same position as that in which he had originally placed it before them—a thing he could not have hoped for, if he had allowed the professor to be his own spokesman.

In accordance with De Mara's arrangements, it was settled that the operation should be performed at his lodgings, whither he was to attend Albert, as the latter declared he could never tranquilly undergo the performance if his sister was either in the room, or so near as to force her image upon his mind. But, though Madeline appeared to yield this point to the decision of the patient, it was only in seeming, for her feelings were

so involved in what was about to take place, that she entered into a secret negotiation with the count that accommodation should be afforded her in the adjoining apartment to that in which the scene was to take place, in order that she might be sufficiently near to be called instantly on the success or failure of the undertaking becoming apparent.

The important morning arrived, and Albert and De Mara proceeded to the apartments of the latter, Madeline taking a tranquil leave of them in the assurance that, in a very few minutes, she would again be secretly, but surely, by the side of her brother, or, at least, sufficently close to him to be all but a party to the minutiæ of the scene. When the patient and his conductor arrived at their destination, they found the professor already prepared for their reception; and as Albert took his first glance at the man on whose skill and ability so much of his future fate rested, there went a movement of gratification through his mind at being consigned to the care of one whose benevolent eye, dignified countenance, and sobriety of expression, gave token of a happy union of philanthropy, knowledge, and steadiness of purpose. The youth almost wished that he had suffered Madeline to accompany him, that she also might be cheered by gazing on the benign features of a man, who, in her belief, was destined to be the introducer of complete organization to her brother's sensory.

As this was one of the cases in which Valdi was unable, owing to the physical defect of Albert, to pursue his usual course of endeavouring, in the first instance, to alleviate the mind of the patient before he proceeded to that which called for his labours, a few minutes only were suffered to elapse before he proceeded to that examination which foreruns the chirurger's judgment on each individual case. A short investigation was sufficient to assure him that the case was similar to that which, by its recital, had introduced him to the notice of De Mara; and, feeling that he had already said every thing to the friend of the patient that caution dictated, he proceeded to arrange his instruments for the undertaking.

While this was doing, a deep silence reigned through the apartment. Albert, with patience and resolution on his brow, sat motionless in the chair that had been prepared for him, while the count and a female whose presence had been engaged in case her assistance should be required, stood in watchful anxiety, gazing on the various strangely moulded instruments that the anatomist handled with a facility and unconcern wondrous, and almost appalling to unscientific eyes. Silence—all was silence, save when some delicately fashioned machine clinked against its fellow as they passed in survey under the dextrous hand and eye of Valdi, and once—save once, when the quick ear of the count detected a rapid, fairy-like, but nervous footfall stealing over the stairs, and ending in the gentle creaking of a door.

At length the operator pronounced his apparatus to be ready.

But whose footsteps was that so hasty and so anxious?—It was Madeline's, as she stole to the corner that had been assigned her. How stealthy is care—how strangely tacit in all its attributes! Had her step been more resounding than the elephant's as he ramps along the scorching plains of Asia—had the faint sigh, half-suppressed and half-uttered, that forced its way through her lips, been more turbulent than the angry roar of Afric's fiercest lion, he, to whom both her silence and her sighs were dedicated, would have been equally unconscious of her vicinity. The one feeling of her soul was so predominant, that memory played her false, and allowed her to forget the individual peculiarities of him for whom the feeling existed.

She is hidden in her solitary station: she has but one attitude—that of the profoundest listening: she has but one gaze—that towards the chamber where the scene in which her soul is present is enacting: feet fixed, eyes unmoved, nostrils dilated, lips compressed—all show the one purpose of her spirit; and, but for the heavy breath that, against her will, forces its way

into air and utterance, he, who should gaze upon her, might believe that she was one—the most beautiful—of the daughters of that famous city of the dead, where every expression of the soul has its statue, and the suddenness of the change has modelled nature in all her universality of shapes.

But why does she hear no sound? Why is there no stir in the chamber—which to her, at that moment, is all the world? Has she lost her faculty? Is she Albert, and Albert she; and is hearing no longer a sense belonging to her? Not a sound! not a murmur! not a whisper! not even the whisper of a whisper whereon to found the dream of one to her awakened and agitated mind!

Each moment becomes more unbearable, and she has that within her which would hurry her like a whirlwind to the spot where her soul dwells. But there is a spell upon her;—she dare not—she cannot break the weight of silence that presses her down, and institutes a want of motion over each limb and action of her frame. Could she but hear a whisper, she would go—the moving of a chair, or the opening of a window, would unchain her from her attitude; but the grave was never more silent, or vacuum more motionless, than that which imbeds her in the lap of torture.

There is a moment beyond which the mind cannot endure the horror of suspense;—that moment is arrived with Madeline—her soul sickens for want of food: it has been panting and yearning for some guidance to instruct it to a conclusion of what the next room beholds. Food there is none, and the wearied spirit can no longer hold out against the faintness and atrophy that is upon it. A moment, and she sinks to earth.

But a sound—a strange, stirring, spirit-stirring sound is heard;—the long-looked-for nourishment is come. Is it too late?—a moment must decide. It hurries over her soul, which may be pictured as the sail that impels the graceful structure of her body. For an instant the fabric stoops, as the long hull of the ship gives way when first she feels her sails filling with the unexpected gale; but, as with that hull, the impression is but momentary. She rights—she rights—Madeline is herself! and another moment conveys her to the chamber where Albert's fate has been decided.

A wondrous sight awaits her there. She enters tottering to the middle of the apartment; but her eye is steady—most steady, fixed and resolute—for no one but her brother does it see. There is a strange hue over his countenance—a strange light gleaming in his eyes—strange but gentle drops of blood trickle from his ears, which contract and expand as if under the movements of some new dilation of the organ.

"Albert—my brother!" cried the wonder-stricken girl, "what mean these involuntary movements?"

"Can it be?" said he; "oh, may it indeed be!—My sister speaks, and I am able to track her soft, silky sounds stealing on some new sensation within my brain: it is human music, and tells me I am no longer an outcast from my fellows of the creation!"

Before a moment elapsed, the Orphans of Unwalden were fast locked in each other's arms; and Albert declared a thousand times that day, that if aught could have enhanced his joy at having his faculties established in their full rights, it was that the first information of that establishment was told in the sweet tones of his sister's voice.

CHAPTER XV.

But soon the eyes rendered the ears their right;
For such strange harmony he seem'd to hear,
That all his senses flock'd into his ear,
And every faculty wish'd to be seated there.—SPENSER.

I know him for a villain; one that hath lost
All feeling of humanity--one that hates
Goodness in others 'cause he's ill himself.—MASSINGER.

Now, indeed, it seemed as if Albert's cup of joy was full as heart could wish. He no longer sat in mournful silence among the gay of spirit, and looked wistfully on their curling lips and dimpling cheeks, which told him they were pushing mirth to its height, and enjoying its mazy rounds: no longer an interloper, he was one of the party, and had his share in

Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.

His sensations were those of another being, or rather of the same being transported into an entirely new scene of action. His heart, night and day, bounded within him for excess of joy; and, in the plenitude of his delight, sleep was too tame an attendant to be allowed to touch his eyelids with her forgetful salve. When the shades of night were on the earth, and others addressed themselves to slumber, Albert would throw himself carelessly on his couch, and scan, with wakeful fancy, his soul's one thought, imbibing fresh draughts of pleasure from the mere consideration of the mighty change that one half hour had produced within him.

"Oh, my new-gained sense!" thus would he commune with himself; "how cheaply prized till found! how dearly valued now I know thy excellence! fond fool that I was to dream--to idly dream that I was made acquainted with the world's delights; when the sweetest, the tenderest, and the heartiest of its pleasures were beyond my apprehension! In my ignorance fain would I have turned philosopher. and formed an abstract picture of what this faculty was capable of presenting. How poor the image, how feeble the portraiture! Oh, how unlike the truth was the warmest painting of my soul! With what foolish fancy did I make it this or that, something I could touch—something I could taste—something I could see—or mixture undefined of all this triad, but no more like this God-appointed sense of hearing than the foul-shaped block of the savage resembles the awful presence of a world's Creator. Already I feel the greatness of my change—now I stand a man; then I lay couchant, but a senseless moveable, with no ear—no capacity for soft sounds, that now come breathing over me, as fairy's whisper to the moonlight of a summer eve. Methought I knew my sister, and loved her; but oh, how poor was my estimate of her beauties! Her soul-breathing eye I could see; her grace-abounding steps I could watch; her soft and living skin, more delicate than dew that has kissed the rose, I could touch, and I loved her.

But what is my feeling now that I can add to all these a perception of her chiefest excellence? What are her eye, her steps, or her fair tapering hand, to her voice, that comes like gentle drops of manna on my ear, and even, when gone, leaves a lingering vibration behind that still holds possession of my very brain! Yes, I did but love her then; now my whole existence adores her; my whole faculties, and I speak it not profanely, are prone to worship her! De Mara, too, how wrongly have I judged him! His look, that seemed to threaten and forbid; and his carriage, that pained me by its haughty bearing, are forgotten in the accents of his manly voice; each tone that comes from him bears dignity in its impress; and nature, as well as birth, in the tongue of eloquence she has bestowed, seems to have intended to ennoble him. I will learn to think better of this man, for never could sounds of such persuasion come from a heart that was naught."

Such were the expressions in which Albert indulged in the fulness of his joy; but the delight of Madeline was scarcely less than his own. It seemed as if she had now, for the first time, a real brother given to her; and she felt that, in persuading him to submit to this happy operation, she had in some degree made up the loss he had sustained through her quarrel with Seaton. She sat hour after hour proving his new-born sense, and weened that she could never tire in marking the progress of its apprehension.

Even De Mara was interested in the scene, which had succeeded almost beyond his hopes. He had never wished any positive mischief to the youth: all he had desired was to render him a nonentity in the prosecution of his suit with the sister. The more he considered the probable results of this new-found faculty, the more he thought it likely it would lead the possessor into a new course of thought and a fresh train of action; and, therefore, it was nowise contrary to his nature that he should rejoice in the result that had been brought about, and attend to its earlier developement with a feeling of interest.

A debate just at this time occurred between De Mara and his companions, as to the comparative pretensions of music and eloquence to influence the heart of man. Madeline and Albert were present; De Mara was the champion of eloquence. At length Maravelli, who had taken the opposite side, abruptly exclaimed—"Well, well, I will not dispute with you any longer, but the result will prove that I am right. There is a grand concert to be given this evening. Let us adjourn to it, and you shall soon see how its magic sounds will attract Albert within its influence."

"I have no objection to that," cried De Mara; "and, after all, it is the only fair way of putting the question with respect to the individual. Only remember, if it should turn out that Albert's present vacuum is supplied by music, I by no means allow that it proves its superiority over eloquence.

One subject only will one genius fit.

And, therefore, though our young friend may be satisfied with music, still the majority would yield the palm to eloquence and poetry. At all events, I shall rejoice at the trial, and still more shall I rejoice if the experiment answers the proposed effect; for I long to see his active and zealous mind suited with a pursuit that shall pour into it all those wonderful delights which so peculiarly belong to the intellectual nature of man."

"And I too shall rejoice beyond expression," cried the affectionate sister; "I want to see my Albert under music's influence; for I cannot doubt, but that a soul so tender, so affectionate, and so overflowing with nature's purest kindliness, will find in the soft tones of harmony the food for which it pines."

Albert, who had listened with the deepest attention to all that had passed, likewise joined in the proposition: the chevalier, however, seemed desirous of carrying his triumph over Maravelli still further, but he was interrupted by Madeline.

"Come," cried she, "if you are not afraid of refutation, it is time for you to drop your theory, that we may give practice an opportunity of illustration. The church has long since chimed six, and we shall be too late for the concert if we do not break up this learned conclave and adjourn to the assembly-rooms."

The hint was received in good part by the company, and every body rose to make themselves ready for the movement. Little preparation was sufficient; and as the distance was but short, and the night fine, it was agreed to walk. Each had a companion save Albert—the count, ever ready to engross to himself the attention of Madeline, placed himself by her side, and led the way: Maravelli, Altoz, and Valdi followed, deep in conversation, as the former was still unwilling to give up the thread of that argument into which he had entered so spiritedly. Each had a companion save Albert;—but if he was alone, it was a spirit of self-exclusion that induced it. Huge masses of mental food had been offered to him in the course of the conversation that had been carried on, and he wanted the opportunity to digest its substance. It was the first time that he had been introduced to any thing like the encounter of wits, and the setting of one man's thoughts against another; and he was, as it were, confounded between the conflicting testimony that the one or the other had brought forward to support his view of the subject. Nor was this all. His mind had been much excited;—it was natural that it should have been; for the whole of this novelty of situation was deeply involved with the interest attaching to his own particular position. It was as though he had been their only topic—his feelings—his faculties—his sensations; and the words that had fallen from them had been listened to by him with a correspondent attention.

When, therefore, he found himself released from the quick and rapid changes of ideas which their dialogue had presented to his mind, he was glad, in mere self-relief, to follow the party at a distance, and afford his intellect a pause. Pause, however, there hardly was:—his movement checked the addition of further matter for consideration, but could not prevent his reiterating to himself each point and turn of thought that had been impressed upon him. It was all a scene of wonder and amazement; and when he reached the concert-room, he could hardly be said to be in a less excited state than he was when he quitted his own home.

But his first glances at the hall of music disappointed him. Maravelli's enthusiasm, which had painted music as the ambrosia of the gods, had led his new disciple to expect to find in the abode of this heavenly food a receptacle suited to so sacred and high-prized an office. He could find no such symbol of sublimity or reality: the room was handsome, lofty, and spacious, with an orchestra at one end, and seats at the other; but it had none of that mysterious aspect which his own crude conclusions on the Italian's description had led him to expect. He looked around, and there was something wanting;—what it was, he could not tell;—he was not bound to tell, for he had come there to ascertain what that something was, not to pourtray that which was a strange and undefined enigma to his imagination.

The first general glance not having satisfied his inquiry, he tried to single out something that would better accord with the present tone of his feelings. The place that ought to afford this most amply was the orchestra, and he examined its contents with a minuteness and curiosity, such as a Red Indian might be supposed to have when a watch is placed in his

hand for the first time, and he starts back at the idea of his being within the reach of some unknown and perhaps poisonous living creature; or, perhaps, in the absence of an alarm so native, he rather resembled Spenser's butterfly in his visit to the flower garden.

> There he, arriving, round about doth flie
> From this to that, from one to other border,
> And takes survey with curious busie eye
> Of every flowre and herbe there set in order.

Still, however, the investigation was unsatisfactory. The shapes of the instruments were certainly quaint and uncommon; but, for the most part, that quaintness was rather uncouth than beauteous. He had expected to gaze on the delicate and aerial-like condition of a fairy; and in its place found nothing but the crooked and piebald phantasma of a goblin. The long and lanky flute, bored with many holes, seemed to him like some serpent stiffened in the frost, with each round spot upon his skin made more visible by the crisping of the air: the violin, to his fancy, was some new model of a fantastic Chinese slipper, with the toe moulded to some fresh and unparalleled device: the huge drum was no better than a vast and endless roll of covered parchment, too large even for a lawyer's office; and the clarionet, with its strange and zigzag mouldings, called to his memory the door-posts of some dandy burgomaster's Dutch villa, as he had seen them given in old pictures of Holland's favoured edifices.

These unsatisfactory glances and strange similitudes, which Albert's active fancy furnished, passed with rapid progress through his mind, and it might be that they somewhat damped the ardour of his expectation; but even if they did, the embers of his previous excitement still lay smouldering in his brain, and ready to burst forth again in active flame on the first disturbance they might receive in their present equivocal state.

But the time allotted for this survey was but short. The signal for the performers to enter the orchestra was given, and they streamed in one after the other till the place was filled. A minute after, the leader made his appearance, and took his seat on an elevation in the midst of them. There was something about the appearance of this person calculated to catch the attention. His features wore a strictness and severity of expression, which his little twinkling eye would seem to belie; and there appeared to be about his whole behaviour a mockery of staidness, which might have been meant for dignity, but which, to the judicious observer, stood a far greater chance of being interpreted as an assumption of that characteristic, and not its reality.

A word more about this "Maestro di Capella," though it makes our story halt for a moment. How he ever came to be thrust into the regions of music, no one could relate. There, however, he was, with something like a reputation in his profession, though, beyond a correct mechanical mode of performance on his instrument, he had no one point to recommend him. But though the judicious here placed the boundary to his merits, the maestro himself was by no means of the same opinion: somebody had once told him, early in his career, that he resembled Haydn; why, Heaven only knows, for the strongest point of resemblance was, that both had noses: but the hint was taken, and from that moment he was determined to be, not only like Haydn, but equal to Haydn, so that in future ages the names of Haydn and Herr Sassenhogt should be mentioned together. He set to work at composition. Haydn had had his "Seasons;" why should not Sassenhogt have his "Climates?" Haydn had delighted all Europe with his "Sinfonias;"—his compeer was determined to astound as many with his "Trombodrumbolargos,"— a word of his own invention, but not badly suited to

express the principal feature of his rival compositions. But it was not only in these great results that he would be thought like Haydn: his hair must be dressed in the same style, his gait must assume the same carriage, and he had actually paid a Russian Jew eight hundred rubles for a pair of dingy paste shoe-buckles, because the fellow, who was "bearded like the pard," had had the wit to persuade him that they were those which Haydn had worn to his dying day. To those who were acquainted with Herr Sassenhogt, all these base metal imitations of something beyond his comprehension were mightily annoying; and the only advantage that they, and the world at large, had ever gained by the connexion was, that the maestro, because Haydn had done so, insisted on all the performers under him having the instruments ready tuned before the company of the evening were admitted; so that they, like the band that had been under the guidance of that immortal master of harmony, might strike off on the given signal without any of those abominable tr—tr—tr—truts (as Tristram Shandy calls them) which are ever most offensive "to ears polite" in music.

Hark! 'tis the little tap of the maestro in token of the commence. Albert knows not the meaning of the sound, but still it reaches the spirit that was lying dormant within him; which, in its turn, confesses the appeal, and begins to be roused from its inactivity. The whole room is hush, as though the heart, great mistress of the whole, had commanded silence from the other members of the human constitution. Another gentler yet more authoritative tap succeeds.—They start in one grand crash.

The very first bar had its effect upon Albert: with a convulsive grasp his hand clenched the seat on which he sat, as though some great exertion of animal strength was necessary to keep him in his place. Bar on bar succeeds—and the swelling sound, full of majesty and grace, takes possession of all the vacant air. Albert is in ecstacy, but it is that sort of ecstacy which seems by its very virtue to threaten to overwhelm the patient; it is too essential for man to endure.

The spirit of the composition somewhat subsides. Gently, and in soothing measure, it seeks to diffuse itself through the soul that a moment before it was taking by storm. The heart of Albert melts within him; and big round tears rush from nature's sluices down his conscious cheeks. Still more and more the measure urges him: he would conceal the deep sobbing of his breast, but cannot.

Again the measure changes; and again it takes all Albert with it. A strange concord of sweet sounds now rushes through the room—not the bold and overwhelming summons of the first, nor the gentle insidious magic of the second, but a mingling of both.

> "The force of nature could no further go;
> To make a third, she joined the former two."

For a while—for a short while, Albert listens to the strain; but it was with a sort of ecstatic agony that must be relieved, or give way before the effort. No relief comes. It seems as though the great master, whose work it was, had been foretold the purpose to which it would that evening be applied, and, vain of his power, had put it forth to the utmost of his genius. The youth gasps and pants for want of very breath; still no release from the sweet agony that thralls him; and then, as if in act of mere self-preservation, he rushes from the room he knows not whither.

Which way he moves, he heeds not. The penetrating sounds he has just quitted still vibrate in his ears, and he hurries on as though the swiftness of his motion might serve to cool the transports of his brain. By degrees his rhapsody subsides, and he finds himself, he knows not how, on the banks of that mighty lake that is the pride of Switzerland and the

admiration of the world. With easier pace and more considerate tread, he moves along the shore. The dulcet sound of the flowing waters, as they meet the land, is a gentler music, and softens the fiery spirit awake within him. He rouses from the trance which has come upon him like an incubus of pleasing torture, as mighty over him in its sway as Allova's Dream to the soul of the hero, and is able to take survey of each surrounding object. The whole scene that thus in a moment breaks upon his view is suited to allay the fierce ferment he had undergone: while his ear feasts on the tranquil music of the waters, his eye receives a like delight from the high moon of heaven that silvers all the wave, and by its sparkling reflection picks out the snow-capt apex of some giant mountain from the distant obscurity. As he looks around him, he feels that the new-born impressions of his soul are as capable of affording pleasure as pain. The first breaking-in upon his unprepared sensory has lost its irritating influence; and what remains is of that elastic and joy-exciting kind in which the mind delights to revel, and which gives it tone and feeling to imbibe the most refreshing delights from all that nature and the world offer to its survey.

Engaged in these pleasant scenes, he wanders on till his course is stopped by a jetty that projects from the water-side. To his eye, taught by the early scenes of Unwalden to look for the picturesque, it affords an agreeable interruption; and he amuses his fancy by observing on the ground the grotesque shadowings its open and straggling timber affords to the moon, that shines on the other side in uninterrupted lustre. As the lazy bachelor after his solitary meal sits over his winter fire, and traces in the arrangement of the glowing embers various objects of "flood and field," so Albert, in the vivacity of his fancy, discovers in the deep shadows cast from this rude piece of workmanship a new and freakful set of pictures. In one spot he traces the rude outline of a Moorish cupola, and he thinks of fair Circassians, Damascene sabres, and Iman's vows:--but his eye roves; and the next shadow or two taken into the story, the cupola melts away, or, being remodelled to the working of his fancy, helps to picture forth a pack of wolves straining their famished bodies in pursuit of a gallant steed, that gallops up, and up, and up a strange ascent, till the whole dissolves, and the imaginary scene is gone as it came. But what is this? The outline of a man! Yet how strangely perfect in all its parts--no limb is wanting—no proportion wrong, even to the very profile of his face. The youth looks up to discover what strange arrangement of timbers produces so perfect a delusion, and through the maze of wood-work beholds a man indeed.

As soon as this unexpected intruder on the privacy of the scene perceived that he was observed, he threw a large cloak around him:--the shadowed outline, as pourtrayed by the moon on the tranquil shore, was turned into an unmeaning mass. But the man--the creature—still remained something too living and substantial for the moon to influence.

Albert, who was neither of a fearful nature, nor had yet been taught by bad men the lesson of dread, stood for a minute gazing at the stranger; and then, as if unwilling to intermeddle with a matter in which he had no pretence for being a party, turned gently round and prepared to retrace his steps. A quick motion of the midnight cloaker, however, seemed as if this was about to be prevented, for he strode rapidly forward, and placed himself in front of the orphan. Albert paused, as if questioning the meaning of this interruption: the other paused also, as if in doubt, and then, apparently changing his intentions, he moved out of the youth's direct path, who walked slowly forward, somewhat surprised at finding that by his pace the stranger regulated his own.

"My good friend," at length said Albert, "is it so very necessary that we should walk together?"

"The voice too," muttered the other;--"voice and face—face and voice! I did not think I had so much heart left;"—but still he kept pace with the youth.

Albert did not well know what to make of his new acquaintance; but he determined to bring the point to an issue. Suddenly he made a full stop, and said, "Come, sir, be pleased to choose your road. Take which you list; but in return leave me also to my own free choice."

The man gazed again at the boy as if irresolute what to do. "I never yet," said he with a heavy voice, "did sue for charity--I never thought I should: but there is something in the tones that meet my ear that would alter my purpose; so let it be for charity's sake that you afford me help."

Albert was not altogether pleased with this address, but there was a bitterness in the voice that addressed him that, to his nice ear, bespoke misery and want, and he gave the demander the only two francs he had in his possession. "This is my whole stock," said he; "would it were more!"

"Money and kindness too!" cried the other, and there seemed to be a strong inward feeling on him. "Will my friend forgive me if I ask his name?"

"I am afraid that can be of little use; however, it is Albert Schvolen, at your service."

He in the cloak shook his head, as if in disappointment; and they again moved on together in silence.

At length the youth exclaimed, "This is against our contract: the money was given on condition that we parted. So, good night."

"Yet one word," cried the other; "I am a man without friend or connexion—without money and without means. Cannot your young heart pity such a one?"

Albert's answer was a sigh.

"If that sigh was for me, I could—Psha! is this to be my strain after all that has passed? Yet one word;—a last effort with a distant friend will occupy me a month. It is a mad request I have to make; but will you, one month hence, meet me at this hour at the jetty?"

Albert started, as if he felt that it was indeed a mad request, and gravely shook his head as he gave a decided negative.

"By Heaven," cried the other, his voice rising with anger, "you must, for I feel—no matter what; but you *must* come!"

Albert was again peremptory in his refusal, on which the stranger grasped him by the shoulder, as though he were Gigas standing over a mere son of earth, while he exclaimed, "Never will I loose my hold till you promise to come."

Albert began to be alarmed. "Why not come to me in Geneva?" he replied.

"Come to you—and in Geneva! no, no, I have too much respect for my neck to set foot in Geneva just now. I would as soon jump into a tiger's den, or face an alligator. Promise, young sir, promise to come."

Albert, still more terrified, cried, "I do promise."

"On this night month at twelve?"

"I promise."

"Then farewell till then, and see you keep that promise; or neither Geneva nor ten thousand gates of adamant shall shut me from you."

And with rapid strides he vanished from the spot, where the youth stood awhile wrapt in wonder and dismay.

It was not, however, long before he made his way home. On his arrival he found the whole party he had so abruptly quitted at the concert-room naturally anxious on account of his absence: but under the plea of indisposition he avoided any explanation, and sought his own room, where for many an hour he ruminated on the strange events that had filled the evening.

CHAPTER XVI

GEN. Amazement still pursues me,—how am I changed,
Or brought ere I can understand myself
Into this new world!
ROB. You will believe no witches?
GEN. This makes me believe all,—ay, any thing.
HEYWOOD AND BROOME'S LATE LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

LET it not be said that Albert's sensations on that eventful night of music and excitement were beyond the nature of man. Those who have been accustomed to the liquid tones of harmony from their first infancy, beginning with the muse's song when she would hush the sickly babe to slumber, have learned the effect of magic chords betimes, and with each lesson have imbibed a share of self-governance and controul; so that when their faculties have grown to that full strength, which enables them to taste the true spirit of music's meaning, there is a discretionary prudence near at hand, also full grown, which seems to check that wild and ardent overrunning of the soul, which mastered Albert in his first moments of receiving the insiduous strain that diffused itself through each cranny of his brain. His very sense and power of conception were ready for the impulse; but no early training of the mind, or customary apprehension through the sense of hearing, had put it in his power to tame and subdue those fine and thrilling emotions which came with keener relish, but with more irresistible dominion over him.

With this pervading stimulus active in his mind, it will be small matter of wonder that the subsequent occurrences of the evening had but little of his attention. When he thought of the strange creature that had met him on the shores of the Lake, his experience was not enough to deduce the conclusion whether he was most madman, rogue, or fool—one or other, or all of them he must have been; and Albert shortly dismissed him from his mind, with the sensible determination of thinking no more either of him or of his midnight appointment.

The effect that De Mara had been desirous of producing seemed to be working its way to his fullest satisfaction, and he was each day able to perceive in Albert's manner more and more alteration from his former habits and pursuits. Long solitary walks, or whole hours spent by himself in the solitude of his chamber, seemed now to be his sole delight; and though the count might at first have been dubious as to the influence under which this was taking place, it was impossible long to be in suspense on this particular. Steal to his chamber-door when the youth thought himself alone, or softly creep behind him as he strolled along some unfrequented walk, and ever was he to be heard repeating to himself those beauteous passages of mingled harmony that had so entirely taken possession of his imagination; the accuracy with which he had caught them was astonishing; it seemed as though this new gift of hearing had been bestowed on him for this and this alone, and that all other sounds were dead and unprofitable in the comparison.

De Mara found but two drawbacks to the completement of Albert's virtual separation from his sister: the one was in Madeline's uneasiness at the violent manner in which her brother was affected, and the other in Albert's occasional voluntary return to his former customs. For days he would scarcely be seen by any one: if he joined them at meals, it was only for form-sake: and often before the ceremony was half performed, he would

start up, and again disappear for many hours: but still there were times when all this changed, and he returned to the society of De Mara and his sister. The question was, from what principle this re-action arose; and the count with his usual perspicuity turned his whole attention to the point. From what he was able to make out, he came to the conclusion that this restlessness of Albert arose from an over-much dwelling upon one particular theme, till it came almost under the guise of a fearful phantasma to his imagination, and forced him through mere nervous apprehension to seek relief in the society of human beings where brain-fed and unreal images find more difficulty of access.

With this mystery interpreted to his satisfaction, the count thought that he perceived how one remedy would be sufficient to remove the uneasiness of both the orphans. He presented to Madeline a picture of her brother, which was not very far from the truth: he showed her how he was suffered too much to brood by himself, and run riot in his imaginations, till those very imaginations turned upon him and held him, as it were, at bay: he bade her observe how it was only when most depressed and affrighted that Albert sought the society of his fellow-beings; and how, when somewhat re-assured by an observance of their humanities, he again plunged into the recesses of his own chimeras. The remedy that De Mara had to suggest for this fitfulness of intellect was, that some one should be found whose musical talent should be such as to render him a suitable companion for Albert; and who at the same time should be possessed of a steadiness of purpose that should tend to make the youth more methodical in his researches, and prevent his feeding his own crude faculty with a deleterious mixture of what he might imagine to be music.

Madeline thankfully acceded to this proposal, for she saw in it nothing but what was calculated to be most beneficial to her brother: nor was he averse from it; for though he at first winced under the idea of having any human creature partake of the sacred and unutterable effusions of his brain, yet when he understood that the person proposed was no other than the great maestro, who had conducted the feast of music on his first introduction to its delights, he could not but believe that he of all men must be the one most intellectual, most profound, and most enwrapt in the mysteries and excellences of his profession.

On the part of Herr Sassenhogt no difficulty was raised which the money and eloquence of De Mara did not speedily overcome; and the arrangements were soon complete by which Albert became a daily attendant on the *studio* of this learned musician.

But though the count had got some way into the secret of Albert's present state of mind, he had not entirely penetrated into its depths; and consequently, though his interpretation of the spirit that actuated the youth was accurate as far as it went, there was that behind which passed his comprehension, or rather lay too far below the surface to have attracted his notice.

He looked for the streak of ore that ran through Albert's soul, and, having found one, did not imagine that there might be another and still richer vein more deeply stationed in the mine.

It is when I approach this part of the history of the Orphans of Unwalden that I feel as if my ability would fail me, and that I must at last throw up the pen—hopeless of doing justice to the chain of wondrous elements that led to this most singular formation in Albert's brain. I have endeavoured to show how the power of music was mighty in him beyond the example of any other created being. I have endeavoured to show how it penetrated his very soul, and all its faculties became instinct with its presence. But I have now a heavier task—a more laborious undertaking to perform. I have to record in words what words never yet presented, as though a linguist

should undertake to state a case of metaphysics in some barbarian language which never yet expressed aught beyond things of most common and natural occurrence. I have to tell of strange and unthought-of powers, first and last, invented in the orphan's mind, and producing results which must be called preternatural, because nature has never yet in other instances sanctioned a parallel case.

I do not for a moment hope to persuade the reader that that which must hereafter form the main ingredient of this story is true: I do not even pretend to say that it would have passed as such in the most credulous ages of mankind. I only know that the rude and almost illegible manuscript from which I give this free transcript breathes solemn asseverations of the fact; and that I, as a faithful translator of the spirit of the writing, am bound so far to be its guarantee.

The book has fallen on sceptical and uncompromising times, when asseverations have but little weight. I therefore add none of my own as to what my opinion may be. But I am at least under a vow to myself for honesty-sake, and to the writer of the faint and ill-deciphered lines over which I have so long been poring, for his exordium-sake,* to exert my best powers to give reality to the strange and moving narrative of which I have constituted myself the godfather, by introducing it to the world.

Hic labor—hoc opus est! And it is undertaken: for though the chronicler of this story feels that he must fail in the finer features of the mysterious fabric which the untaught mind of the orphan planned and executed, he still hopes that he may retain the power to paint in feeble colours the effects produced by such a structure, even when the acting substance and machinery are lost for want of words to express, and images to delineate.

As to the profound "Maestro da Capella," Herr Sassenhogt, he never got half as far into the mystery of Albert's self-communication as the count; and he speedily came to the opinion that his pupil would never make a figure, because he had little relish for the rules by which Sassenhogt would have guided his path through the gamut, and still less for the inspiring productions of that great composer.

But one or two fragments of the sort of conversation that took place between them will show better, than may otherwise be explained, the way in which Herr Sassenhogt came to this conclusion with respect to the talents of his pupil.

* * * * * * *

"Now what think you of that passage, my young friend?" cried the maestro, triumphantly winding up a long flourish on his violin, with nearly as long a one with his bow in the air. "What think you of that?"

"I think," said Albert, "that it does not resemble the overture that I heard the first time I saw you."

"Why—ahem!" replied the other, "I do not think it does myself, but you will please to observe that they are very distinct kinds of music."

"That is exactly what I would have said," cried Albert, very innocently.

Sassenhogt looked at him for a minute, and could not find any irony lurking in his eye, and so went on. "The great difference between my music and that to which you have alluded is, that the former is addressed to the head—the latter only to the heart. As to mere melody and harmony, they have been so hackneyed by past critics, that to expect to excel with these only for a guide, is as hopeless as for a cripple to undertake the climbing of Mont Blanc."

* "Thou who readest, or copiest, or even breathest a whisper of this strange tale of woeful truth, as thou valuest honesty or justice, let the same period assure thy listener, that in the conscience of him who writeth these facts are not more strange than true, and not more pitiful than real."—*Exordium to the Unwalden Manuscript.*

"But, surely," replied the pupil, "that which reaches the heart must be the real criterion of that which is addressed to the head."

"Ah, you are talking of the ancient composers. But, thank God, their day has gone by; and Handel and Corelli now are only mentioned by dowdies or grave old gentlemen, who tell at the same minute of the jointures they had to pay their mothers or aunts out of the family estate. Haydn, young gentleman—the immortal Haydn had the sense to perceive that something more was wanting; and those who have since followed his steps have, perhaps, gone beyond him in this particular."

"I do not know of whom I am speaking; but if I were asked of what I am speaking, I should say of something infinitely disconnected with that mechanical arrangement of notes and crotchets which produces sound, but no sympathy; a sort of jangling concord of unmeaning passages, without any of that spirit that seizes on the hearer, and rouses him to excitement, or dissolves him in tears. It is only when this is accomplished that I can say I have heard music; and the rest of what passes under that name is no more akin to it than the tagging of rhymes is to the essential and god-like genius of poetry."

Sassenhogt looked at the youthful enthusiast—said something about his never having heard such heterodox dogmas before—and then, unwilling to dispute further, took his leave for that day of the heretic, earnestly beseeching him to give better attention to the subject.

It may now be easily understood what little reciprocity of sentiment there was between these two. Albert had perceived this almost from the first moment of his intercourse with Sassenhogt; and had it been possible for any thing to check the extraordinary combination that was filling his mind, the introduction of this man of mere science might have effected it; but it was too late to accomplish this. The stream of imagination was rife in Albert's soul; and each minute adding to the torrent, it was ready to hurry him headlong to that discovery that trembled over his brain in subtle and feverish suspense, and appeared each moment eager to involve his whole faculties in its irruption.

But though Albert perceived the inutility of his connexion with the "Maestro da Capella," the maestro himself was by no means reconciled to the loss of his pupil, which also involved the loss of De Mara's bounty; and therefore, notwithstanding the evident disinclination of the youth, he still continued to administer to him his lectures on what he called music, only endeavouring to take care not to touch on those moot points which afforded discontent to both of them. One other portion of a conversation which took place between them—and we will dismiss Sassenhogt from the scene.

* * * * * * *

"Then, according to your conception," said the maestro, "music is capable of no system at all."

"I have proposed no such conclusion," said Albert; "nor could I hope to maintain it if I had. I do believe that music has an order of nature connected with it, as the solar system has, by which it is decreed to work within certain limits, and to be subject to equally certain laws. But I laugh at the man who shall say that the whole of those laws are discovered and analysed."

"You will not deny that the laws of the solar system are in that situation?"

"I will deny nothing, for I do not aspire to the subtle altitude of an arguer or a metaphysician: it is in the humble station of an enthusiast that I wish to rank myself, and as such to enjoy a theory of my own, competent to the wants of my imagination, and equal to the demand of my feelings."

"And to what does that theory amount?"

"I hardly can inform myself that," returned Albert; "and still less can I propound it to another."

"Possibly you can tell what your theory does *not* contain."

"That is an easier task. My present disposition of mind leads me to deny the all-sufficiency of those rules which the magnates of music would lay down to the world for the purpose of degrading that heaven-born gift into a science, instead of leaving it in its true elevation of one of the highest attributes of genius. De Mara tells a story of a man who boasted that he should soon be able to write an epic equal to the Æneid, for he had already ruled six quires of paper, and mended as many hundred pens, for the task. This seems to be the modern musician's standard; he works a tune methodically as a carpenter does a chest of drawers, and poor fancy is sent to pine in wildernesses."

"This is what we of the new school call the mathematics of music," said Sassenhogt; "and surely you would not deny the perfectibility of mathematics."

"Not in itself; but what business has it in the sacred fairy land of music? No one denies that the key-stone of the arch is the perfection of the building, but will that justify the painter in dividing the neck of a steed of price by the rule of arches, and calling it the mathematics of the horse? On the contrary, every one sees in a moment that the two things are incompatible; and, when I am told of the mathematics of music, I see the same thing;—but I promised not to argue, so let me ask you a question instead. I have been reading the story of Tartini and his Devil's Sonata,* and would gladly know how that is to be demonstrated by the mathematics of music."

"Mathematics," said the maestro, with some contempt in his tone, "were never yet thought applicable to flimsy dreams, and therefore I can hardly be called on to draw up a *rationale* for that which is essentially unreal."

"Why unreal? Do you suppose it impossible that some thin and airy spirit (for devil is an ugly name, and we will drop it) might have diffused a charmed influence over the sleeping brain, and worked it to an apprehension of that which, when waking, was lost?"

"Haydn defend me!" cried the astonished music-mathematician; "do you really imagine that spirits have any thing to do with music?"

"I only imagine that the genius of music, like the genius of poetry or painting, is a mystery; and that we have a right, when considering the subject, to debate on every possible way of solving the difficulty. In olden times one man would believe that the unappeased ghost wandered on earth restless and unhappy; another, for his faith, held that unembodied spirits flitted in the midnight breeze."

"But, thank God," said Sassenhogt, "we are wiser now."

"We say we are," answered his pupil; "and why? because we can account for those things naturally which our forefathers could not, and were therefore obliged to have refuge in those other-world explanations. But let another series of mysteries arise, too difficult for even these wise times to simplify, and the first consequence will be that men will again be driven back to the supposition that things beyond this earth are the agents employed in their production. It is in this situation that *I* find music. Either I am more ignorant than the rest of mankind, or more enlightened: be it which it will, I feel something on my brain exceeding comprehension, and that drives me to the wildest speculations in hopes of finding a solution."

"It is there now," added the orphan, in a manner strongly expressive;

* It is related of Tartini that he once dreamt that the devil visited him, and, after some conversation, took possession of his violin, and played a sonata; from the mere recollection of which, on his awaking, the musician nearly went distracted at the thought that, with all his art, he could never hope to rival sounds so exquisite and original.

"and I feel as if my faculty was too confined to contain the perpetual struggle for expansion that is going on within; strange unutterable sounds, fraught with divinest harmony, vibrate on my nerves, and they, in their turn, seem ever on the eve of answering still more strangely. Oh that this might be consummated! Oh that this delicious, dangerous chaos could be arranged, and order given to the sensitive mass that loads me to overswaying."

Sassenhogt was paralysed at the vehemence of the youth, and he cared not again to touch on a subject that was either far above, or, as he imagined, below his comprehension. He therefore determined to leave Albert in future to his own course, merely continuing a show of instruction as long as De Mara chose to keep up the allowance that had bribed him to the undertaking; keeping to himself, by way of salvo for his conscience, the reflection that, if the youth ran riot in his pursuit, it was no fault of his, or of his system, but the result of some strange infatuation that blinded his pupil to the valuable principles of the mathematics of music.

CHAPTER XVII.

Leuc. Dance, Madam?
Bach. Yes, a cavotta.
Leuc. I cannot dance, Madam.—CUPID'S REVENGE.

O fly! 'Tis dire suspicion's mien,
And meditating plagues unseen,
The sorceress hither bends:
Behold her torch in gall imbued,
Behold her garment drops with blood
Of lovers and of friends.—AKENSIDE.

DE MARA did not investigate very closely the terms on which Albert and his master went on. It was enough for him that he saw them occasionally together, and that at all times Albert appeared to be wrapt up in his new pursuits, to come to the conclusion that Sassenhogt was answering the purposes for which he had applied to him, and that his intervention was aiding the separation of the youth from his sister.

But even had the count been disposed to enquire more minutely into the nature of the instruction which the maestro was able to afford, the change of circumstances which took place in his connexion with Madeline would have operated to prevent it. For awhile he waited in anxious hope that the result of all his labours and deep-set intentions would terminate in the fall of Madeline, according to his longing expectation. But though every thing that seemed to present a face of difficulty had been removed—though the maiden herself appeared to have given him all that devotedness of love which women best know how to feel, and how to tender, with a delicacy that makes love a bliss of unutterable sort, still there was an upright purity in her every movement, that seemed to prevent the explosion of the mine that had been so artfully laid in her own bosom, and that defied the most wily attacks of him who held siege around her.

De Mara was confounded at his want of success. Women he had studied, and had thought himself prime master of all their methods; but there was that in Madeline's character which was beyond his ken; and, to his astonishment, he found, that though his machinations were sufficient to make him master of the city, the grand fortress—the capital of the whole—

was impregnable, and resisted his utmost endeavours. There was nothing in the maiden's outward show that enabled him to trace the cause of this failure. She ever smiled at his presence—she ever listened to his most honied words, as though they came soft and grateful to her spirits; and at no moment, whether gay or guarded, lively or demure, could he trace in her a suspicion of his intentions, or a sense of the besetting danger he had woven around her.

Why then was she still obdurate to his purpose? It was true that the light in which he had offered himself to the maiden was that of a husband, and the outward garb in which he cloaked his sinister approaches was that of an espousal before the face of Heaven. But how was it possible that this should have operated to his disadvantage? On the contrary, it ought rather to have led to greater freedom of intercourse, to a more perfect reliance on the honesty of his intentions, and to a more unreserved declaration on her part of the feelings, which it was sufficiently evident she entertained towards him. As far as he could penetrate, it had led to all these results: and yet still, with all these abettors in his favour, his success seemed more than doubtful, and the boundary of his triumph over the heart of the maiden seemed to be irrevocably established.

But although infinitely disappointed at being thus stopped short in his march, he was not dismayed; and with that hot eagerness of purpose which distinguishes the ardent spirit, let its pursuit be good or evil, he resolved to let nothing baffle his design, and to make each defeat only the signal for another and more judicious onset. Madeline, however intricate her disposition, was still a woman; and as the count's favourite motto was —that all women had some point of character less susceptible of defence than another, he still urged his genius of intrigue to fresh inventions, in the hope that at least the fortunate moment would arrive when he should find the citadel unguarded, and be able to take possession with all a conqueror's honours.

Hitherto it had not been any part of De Mara's disposition to distrust his own talents of intrigue; but the long time that he had been labouring in vain to obtain possession of Madeline had forced that distrust upon him; and he was now obliged to confess to himself that his future progress would be in the dark, groping about like Sinbad in the charnel cave, still hoping that some ray of light might break suddenly upon him, and re-illumine the torch of hope in his heart.

But that point of the maiden's character, for which he so anxiously sought, and which he hoped to gain by watching, came upon him by accident. Altoz, who had been long expecting the count to accompany him on a tour through France, the arrangements for which had been planned before their becoming acquainted with Madeline, had deferred his journey from time to time in the hope of enjoying De Mara's company. At length, however, his patience was fairly exhausted; and the count honestly confessing to him that he saw no prospect of the termination of his adventure with the Orphans of Unwalden, the chevalier determined to wait for him no longer, but to set out alone on his journey. For a long time De Mara battled against this resolution; but, finding his friend obstinate, he was obliged to concede to the arrangement, and even agreed to accompany him his first stage on the journey.

"Come, Altoz," cried he, on his friend rising from the breakfast-table, where he had been taking his farewell meal, "if this is to be our last *tête-à-tête* for some weeks, at least I will prolong it as long as my duty as a faithful lover to my mistress will permit. I have no appointment with Madeline till the afternoon, and I can therefore afford to ride *à cheval* the first stage with you."

This offer was gladly accepted on the part of the chevalier, and merrily

they gossipped as they rode side by side. But it was fated that De Mara should not see Geneva again quite so early as he had expected. On crossing the French frontier the party was stopped for the production of their passports; that of Altoz and his servant was declared to be due and regular, but monsieur le comte had none to produce. It was in vain that he protested he was a peer of the kingdom, and that his passported friend vouched for his nobility; the officer on duty, who was a young self-sufficient coxcomb, just appointed, and full of the all-importance of his office, insisted on detaining the *soi-disant* nobleman till his respectability could be better vouched for. De Mara tried the raging, the sarcastic, and the persuasive strain, but they were all equally futile, and the only means of escape that presented itself was sending Altoz's attendant back to Geneva to bring proper vouchers for his release. In the mean time the day was wasting fast; and, to make the matter worse, the servant, with whose zeal no fault could be found, contrived to lose his road, so that it was not till noon the following day that he made his appearance at the French frontier with such documents as were sufficient to procure the count's release from his temporary thraldom.

De Mara's annoyance at this unwelcome delay was excessive; and, in the heat of his passion, he felt half-tempted to call the young jackanapes, who had been the cause of all, to a severe account. Time, however, with him was every thing, and a minute's reflection enabled him to perceive that the undertaking of an affair of honour was not a very likely method of promoting his speedy return to Geneva. He determined therefore to postpone this mode of venting his spleen to a more leisurely opportunity, and, taking a hasty leave of his friend, he galloped back at the height of his horse's pace to Geneva.

In the mean time Madeline had waited hour after hour, vainly expecting the count each moment to make his appearance. In this way the whole of the afternoon and evening of appointment passed away. Nor was the next morning more productive of the looked-for visiter, who, on sending to his lodging, she was informed had quitted them on the preceding forenoon in company with Altoz. This information did not lessen the pique that had been gradually augmenting in her bosom at the prolongation of De Mara's delay. Several sarcastic observations that had fallen from Deboos, in the character of Madame Lalande, had imbued the maiden with no very favourable feeling towards the chevalier; while he, on the other hand, annoyed at the way in which she had engrossed the whole of his friend's company, and induced him to break his travelling engagements, felt no strong desire to overcome the prejudice that he perceived was growing up in her mind towards him. When, therefore, Madeline learned that De Mara's neglect of her was coupled with his attention to Altoz, she felt more annoyed than the bare circumstance of his absence could have produced in her mind, and she waited his re-appearance with proportionate resolution to stand on all the punctilios of an offended mistress.

At length the count made his appearance. Not conscious that he had any neglect wherewith to reproach himself, he entered her apartment with that superlative sort of good humour which arises out of the re-action of previous vexation—determined as the story must tell against himself, to be the first to laugh at the adventure. But the first glance he caught of the countenance of Madeline somewhat damped the good humor that was illuminating his own face; and the thoughts that were a moment before flowing so freely and blithely, seemed suddenly frozen and incapable of expression.

"Many thanks, sir," cried Madeline, drily, "for the punctuality of your visit. I suppose you take me for the lady seated in Comus' magic chair—unable to move till you make your appearance to disenchant me."

"My dearest Madeline," exclaimed De Mara, "it is all a mistake. I would not for the world have broken my appointment, had not——"

"Had not the company of the Chevalier Altoz been so very fascinating," interrupted Madeline; "I am obliged to Count De Mara for making me acquainted with the degrees that mark the thermometer of his regards."

"Now, Madeline, pray do not be so very sure that you are right; but consent to suppose, for a moment, that there may be two views of a subject."

"There is no necessity for your showing two views, sir," cried the girl, "unless you wish to be taken for Janus, though it is not the fashion in these degenerate times to pay much respect to that double-face piece of antiquity."

"But at least allow me to explain—"

"Why should I? Truly I have no right to demand explanation."

"You have every right. Do you think when I acknowledge you for my sovereign mistress, that I mean nothing by it; or, that my declaring myself your servant in all that man can do, means nothing?"

"Really," cried Madeline, "you should not trouble yourself to ask such questions, when your conduct for the last four-and-twenty hours presents such an all sufficient answer to them. When I become sovereign mistress—how small the kingdom I care not—at least my name shall be supreme; and he who declares himself my servant, I shall hold as none from the moment I find he is content to have two rulers. But come," added she, seeing the count look grave, "we will say no more about this matter. As much as I have said, I felt I was bound to give utterance to in justice to us both; for the rest, any excuse will be admissible."

But when De Mara explained to her the difficulty under which he had been labouring, Madeline was two generous not to retract all she had said.

"Forgive me, dear De Mara," cried she, "that I may forgive myself: or, if I must offer an apology for what I have said, receive it in the reflection—that warmth of feeling for neglect includes warmth of feeling for attentions, and that had you not taught me the sweets of the latter, you never would have experienced the bitter of the former."

De Mara pressed the maidens to his arms, and, kissing away the tears that hung like drops of precious gum from some heart-healing tree, swore that he would not have had a word less said of blame, so sweetly had the pain it had inflicted been soothed by the soft balmy declaration that had succeeded.

It was from this incident and its consequences that De Mara gathered a light which he determined should aid him in his future course. He investigated the traits of disposition Madeline had displayed in this short conversation, and he thought he plainly perceived that, to attack her on the side of her vanity, was to insure success; and that, by properly playing her wounded self-complacency against itself, he should make himself more entirely master and comptroller of her heart than by any other means that could be adopted. Again and again he repeated to himself every word that had passed between them, and more and more plainly he perceived that his solution of the temper of mind that had dictated her words was the correct one. At the same time it was evident that her native goodness of disposition had soon led her to correct the fault into which she had fallen, and to retrieve, to the utmost of her power, the error she had committed. But the count had long been an adept in feeding the failings of the sex, and he had little doubt that, with proper attention and opportunities, he should be able to fan this smouldering, and almost inert feeling of the mind, into a furious and overpowering flame. At all events the experiment was worth trying, and De Mara set himself about the task with all the *goût* of a young and

hot-blooded cadet, joined to the experience and finesse of a grey-headed campaigner.

As for Madeline, she appeared all anxiety to remove by the suavity of her demeanour any disagreeable impressions her petulance might have raised in the mind of De Mara, who thought she had never appeared half so delightfully amiable as now that her manner was tinged with a slight embarrassment at the consciousness of having accused him unjustly; and who longed for another occasion to raise the same troublous emotions in her bosom, even though they should produce no effect more to his purpose, than the same exquisite perplexity of manner, and the same pretty desire of wiping away the wrong that she had committed.

The engagement that De Mara had been forced to break with his mistress was one that had been planned for the purpose of taking a drive a few miles into the country; and when there, having their usual ramble on foot, by which means Madeline was to be afforded an opportunity of seeing the rural beauties of the nighbourhood, without the fatigue of walking till they should commence. For such an object as this, one day was as well suited as another; and, at the request of De Mara, it was arranged that the next day should be devoted to that purpose. The morning arrived, as beautiful as the most ardent admirer of Nature in her simple attire could desire; and Albert having declined according to custom, joining them, Madeline and the count proceeded in an open carriage along the plain where the Saleve and Mole so suddenly and so picturesquely raise their enormous heads towards the skies in a multitude of fantastic forms, baffling the most fanciful imagination to picture out all their strange and uncouth similitudes to things of heaven and earth. No sooner were the travellers fairly embosomed in the fruitful and flower-decked scenes, that this lovely and luxuriant plain so bountifully affords in every direction, than they quitted the vehicle that had conveyed them thither, and wandered arm in arm where best their fancy pleased. The count, who could love nature or any thing else, when occasion demanded, dwelt with soft and suiting words on the charms that surrounded them—at one time comparing them with the still more sunny-loveliness of southern Italy, and at another with the bleak and ruder aspects of the north, with which his far extended European travelling had made him acquainted; while Madeline with a greedy and devouring ear listened to the pleasing variety with which he decked his discourse.

But on a sudden their conversation was unseasonably checked.

They had just arrived at the skirts of a little copse, that with its leafy and sun-forbidding enclosure graced the side of a rivulet, when some remark of De Mara was interrupted by the shriek of a female; and the moment after, a young maiden rushed with a perturbed and rapid step from one of the winding paths of the plantation, near which they had made a sudden halt, in silent wonder what such a cry of distress might mean, and whence it came, to destroy the peaceful tranquillity of the scene. The moment the stranger perceived that there were two persons near her, she flew towards them; and then, as if entirely exhausted by the effort, she sank on the ground at their feet without a word. The mystery of her appearance, however, was in part explained to De Mara, when he observed a man break through the copse at nearly the same point whence the female had issued, with sufficient speed in his motions to denote that pursuit was his object. When the ruffian, for such his appearance stamped him, saw, that his victim had found such unexpected protection, he halted for a moment, as if deliberating within himself whether he might venture to attack her even while under escort; and then, prudence seeming to get the better of the spirit of rapine that had actuated him, he hastily retreated to the shelter from which he had so rapidly emerged a minute before.

In the mean time, Madeline, unconscious of the presence of this suspi-

cious intruder, was busily employed in endeavouring to restore the suspended animation of the fair stranger. After awhile she succeeded; but her return to consciousness was accompanied by the most violent trembling of her whole frame, as if she had only awakened from her trance to remember with full acuteness some painful occurrence that had been thrust upon her. The assurances of her two new protectors, however, by degrees recomposed her, and she seemed gradually to throw off that delirium of terror which had taken possession of her timid and susceptible imagination. Her explanation of the incident was short, but sufficient: from her statement it appeared, that--a native of Geneva--she was spending a few days with her aunt who resided in the neighbourhood of the scene where this transaction was taking place, and had been tempted by the fineness of the day to wander through the copse, with a book as her only companion: while intent upon her study, a man rudely clad, but chiefly enveloped in a large and threadbare cloak, well marked with travel-stains, stood before her and demanded her money and trinkets. His threatening attitude, the sternness of his address, and the gloomy lowering eye he fixed upon her as he spoke--all forbade a minute's hesitation, and she gave him what little silver she had--trinkets she had none.

"Ho, ho!" cried the robber, "then I must have trinkets' worth; I know a good soul that is fond of buying dresses of such a pretty pattern as that you wear; so pray imagine this a lady's boudoir—Eve did with a worse—and I will be lady's-maid to help you doff it."

The girl, alarmed at his manner as well as his command, sprung from him, and with loud cries of terror, he fast pressing at her heels, flew towards the skirts of the copse, with scarcely any formed hope in her mind save that of an indefinite chance of escape. The rest of her simple tale is already narrated.

Of course she was not again left alone till conducted in safety to the house of her relation; who, when informed of the obligation she had incurred to Madeline and the count, would on no terms allow their departure till the approach of evening warned them that it was time to return to the city. Mademoiselle Basault, their new acquaintance, and as it were, protegée, seemed never tired of reiterating her thanks to both for the protection they had so opportunely afforded her; and her fine eyes and richly mantling cheeks seemed every minute ready to offer the tribute of a tear and a blush of gratitude, as she recorded again and again the manner in which she had been so happily delivered from her peril.

But this was an opportunity not to be slighted by the count. At any time the handsome face and feminine manners of the youthful thanksgiver would have gained his admiration; but now, when the progress of his plot against Madeline demanded such an opportunity, and was only waiting for a fit object on which to invest it, he gave a full license and flow to that gallantry for which a well educated Frenchman seems to have received the world's patent and letter of marque. But, however attentive he was to Mademoiselle Basault—and he rejoiced that the peculiar circumstances of his introduction to her authorised his displaying a warmth of manner which on any other occasion would have been too *prononcé* to be within the bounds of politeness—he took care to have always sufficient regard to Madeline, to be able to note the effect that his address to the other had upon her.

Poor Madeline! it was a severe ordeal that she had to undergo, but she acquitted herself well; ever and anon a growing jealousy at his marked observance of Mademoiselle Basault would conjure strange thoughts into her heart; but the firmness of her mind gave them battle, and each time that the outset was made, her decision put them to the rout. Her good sense even enabled her to argue the subject with herself. Was it not na-

tural that the stranger should feel grateful to a man, who, though his presence had only been used, would no doubt have faced her enemy, had there have been occasion, and who, at all events, whether actively or passively, had effected her deliverance from a most dangerous situation? On the other hand, could De Mara do less than acknowledge with grace, and even almost tenderness, those grateful outpourings of the heart which were offered him in the pure spirit of earnest thankfulness? Perhaps his manner was a little more ardent than the occasion demanded, but then the line was a difficult one to be drawn; and not meaning, for how could she suppose he meant to distress her, he was probably erring on the right side, in meeting the fervour of the stranger's thanks by a more than equal fervour on his own. And still further, whether right or wrong, it would be quarrel-seeking in such a case to reprehend or find fault with his behaviour to one day's acquaintance, when probably they might neither of them ever again see the other in the whole course of their lives.

This is an outline of the self-appeasing reflections that Madeline inculcated to her somewhat uneasy fancy—and they had their effect. The count watched her closely: he saw her quail, he saw her re-assured, and with vexation was obliged to confess to himself, that with all his skill he had not been able to lay any visible or certain corner-stone for that fabric dedicate to jealousy, that he purposed raising in her mind: and still more was he confirmed in this, when on their return home Madeline not only spoke with pleasure of the occurrences of the day, but dwelt with reasonable praise on the beauty of Mademoiselle Basault; at the same time rallying De Mara on the speed with which he had endeavoured to establish himself in the young lady's good opinion.

Still he had seen her quail; and, though it was but for a moment, it justified a hope that a repetition of similar attacks might produce a more permanent effect. The passions may be acted on, as a continual dropping of water will produce the decomposition of the stoutest marble; and De Mara, though he could not yet flatter himself that he had actually succeeded in laying a foundation was not slow to believe that he had sown a small and almost imperceptible seed, that with proper watering and culture would by-and-by yield the fruit for which he looked. In this hope his mind was still active to be employed in the same pursuit, and he stood ever on the watch to find some other Mademoiselle Basault with whom his opportunities might be greater and proportionably successful.

It was with this view that, two days after this adventure, he persuaded Madeline to accompany him to a grand ball that was to be given in Geneva by one of the chief magistrates, in honour of his only daughter having come of age. It was not much persuasion that Madeline required, for she had a heart of gaiety ever open to the sprightly movements of the dance, and she had often thought, with an innocent sigh, of the gay dancing of the villagers of Unwalden, when on high-day and holiday they mustered at the well-known spot dedicated from time immemorial to the prosecution of such festive scenes, and gave their whole hearts to the mirth-inspiring spirit of the hour. This proposal of De Mara, therefore, was doubly welcome: always happy to be with him who had fascinated her soul by his eloquence and attentions, and the combined elegance of his person and manners, she felt that the zest of that companionship would be heightened by a scene that would revive in her memory the many happy hours she had spent in a like amusement around the nurture-spot of her childhood. It would be a sort of identification of her present situation with past happiness—an authorizing of her present pursuits by the example and countenance of those which had been allowed and looked kindly on by her mother.

It was with such sensations as these, that Madeline accompanied the

count to the rooms where the ball was to be given; and the scene that presented itself to her notice on her arrival there, was in every respect calculated to heighten those sensations. The suite of apartments into which they were ushered blazed with a thousand lights, which reflecting mirrors, suspended in golden framework from the walls, gave back with double interest where the mirrors were not;—gay and festive drapery swept in rich festoons along the sides, glistening with fresh and pinky tinge, like some bevy of young maidens first let upon the world's bright passages, when their cheeks borrow a quick supply of the heart's most honest blood to blush their pleasure and surprise. Music too was there, as light, as fresh, and as brilliant as the mere substantial shows of the night, lending its aid to make the magic "firm and good." The blithe and airy measure of the dance knocked at the heart's door, and found a willing entrance, but no resting-place; for the ruling fairy of the scene was one of those restless spirits that know neither cessation nor pause, when such fancy-stirring business is afloat. But the grand consummation of the whole was the living charm of the place. Hundreds of beautiful faces, whether instinct with feminine grace or openness, were beaming with the gladsome turmoil of the scene: it was a representation of the fabled palace of truth; for the impress of each heart seemed stamped on the countenance, and the motto on all hands, lighted up by bright eyes and laughing cheeks, was "joy—joy—joy!" it was a human illumination—a soul-fed bonfire of rejoicing; and Madeline, as she gazed around, thought she had never before seen so exquisite a picture of what philosophy in its researches after man's happiness ought to paint.

But though the cup that was here offered to the maiden's taste was all so brilliant, "dropping odours, dropping wine,"—there was destined to be a scruple of poison intermixed, the infusion of which was to turn sweet to bitter—joy to sorrow—bright thoughts to heavy sighs. And who was the fell disturber that broke all the humanities at once? Who was he that in the unguarded moment of honest and pure delight hovered around to stab all happiness with grievous and mortal wound? Look in the handsome face of Count De Mara! observe his gay but unaffected air of elegance; mark his well-formed features, tutored (but so cunningly as to seem nature-taught) to a bland and heart-winning smile; listen to his words that fall with sunny softness on the pleased and willing ear of his mistress! Listen, mark, observe—and then say whether it be possible to believe that such a man can indeed be a second Richard who knows how to

"Smile and smile, and murder while he smiles."

The first Richard had a body to answer the deformity of his mind, for no one expects to find genuine warmth in an unroofed dwelling; and it was a something towards a wicked apology that he was able to exclaim—

"Then since the heavens have shaped my body thus,
Let hell make crookt my mind to answer it."

But how was this, the second and the worst—so goodly in form, so shaped a creature, that it seemed as if nature had had some Endymion fancy for his father, and cast her godson in a favourite mould? Oh, it is a cruel trial for humanity when the brightest form is found encasing the most distorted soul!

Scarcely had Madeline taken survey of the gay scene that surrounded her, and impregnated her fancy with a flow of happiness that was to last the evening, when a young lady ran up to her, and, shaking her most cordially by the hand, expressed a thousand gratulations at again meeting her.

A moment's glance told the orphan that it was Mademoiselle Basault who was greeting her: and though a tinge of some indefinite feeling came across her at the discovery, it did not prevent the receiving her with a proper expression of pleasure at the rencontre. But De Mara soon relieved his mistress from any necessity of supporting the conversation: overjoyed at again meeting the instrument through whose agency he had commenced a series of attacks, he saw in a moment how much more advantageous to his purpose it would be, to pursue the same system with one who had already been implicated, and through whom the first blow had been given, than to wait for another more distant, and perhaps less suitable object. His whole powers of conversation were therefore summoned to his aid; and never had he exerted himself so brilliantly—and so banefully.

But his manner of marking this new addition to their party became still more determined. It had happened naturally enough, from his well knowing that Madeline could have no acquaintances at the ball but such as he might introduce, that he had not undergone the formality of asking her hand for the dance; the conclusion on both sides being that, as they went there as companions and plighted partners in the dance of life, they would be such at this—the first ball to which he had ever attended Madeline. In the course of conversation, however, that took place between the trio, it was cursorily mentioned that Mademoiselle Basault was not yet provided with a partner. It was a bold stroke on the part of De Mara, but not the less a full consequent of the policy on which he had determined to act; and he at once solicited the honour of her hand. The young lady curtsied her thanks and, the music for the dance at that moment striking up, away they tripped with a simple "au revoir" from the count to his mistress.

It was a strange bewildering emotion that came over the feelings of Madeline at that moment; a sort of dreamy sensation, as she repeated again and again to herself, "is it possible?" And what a situation to be left in! Indignation prompted her to quit the room on the instant, but such an act was next to impossible: alone, unfriended, deserted if she rose to go, she knew not which way to proceed, nor what step to take. In vain she looked round the room for a face with which she might have the most distant acquaintance—she could not even imagine such a one: and ever as she took the circuit, her gaze in spite of herself terminated at the bitter spectacle of De Mara and her rival, sweeping through the airy mazes of the step with a lightness that to her feverish fancy seemed assumed to mock her wo. Once as she so gazed, the count whispered in the ear of his partner: the girl blushed, tittered, directed her look towards Madeline, and then tittered again. Good God! was it possible that the faithless deserter was commenting on her distress, and making his new-found mistress merry with the situation in which he had placed her? Was it not enough that she was to be abandoned for another, without dragging her misfortunes to the feet of her rival for their meed of derision, as the Romans of old dragged the miserable vanquished in triumph at the chariot-wheels of their victorious generals?

But why such thoughts? Jealousy, the curser of all happiness, the mocker of all pleasures, was rife within her heart. Each moment gave it more absolute possession of her feelings; and the more her soul writhed at the torture, the more was it implicated in the meshes of the fatal net that had been spread to entrap her. Warm-hearted, enthusiastic girl! her own feelings were destroying her; and those that should be subjects, were fast mounting into the character of tyrants.

But they return. And must she sit still to brook the taunts that seem to her disturbed imagination to play in sardonic smile on their lips? They speak. Oh that she might dare speak; but the spell of silence once dissolved, the lips once opened, she feels that not all the powers of heaven, or

earth, or hell, could prevent her giving vent to the raging flames that had possession of her heart.

Is there no relief from this torture? Whither speed, that its fire-brands may be overthrown and extinct? Nature has its bounds, human power its limits, and her heart-strings may crack in spite of her firmest resolution to withstand all and every indignity that may be offered.

The Angels be praised!—Mademoiselle Basault is summoned to another part of the room by her aunt. The actual application of the torture is suspended, and the brain has now only to bear up against the heavy infliction that it has already undergone.

De Mara traces something of what is passing within the mind of Madeline; and even he, in the moment of his triumph, quakes lest he may have prosecuted success too far. His instinctive readiness acquaints him that the first step to be taken is to remove his victim from the scene of her misery, and from the presence of Mademoiselle Basault. A carriage is hastily summoned—Madeline handed in—and, in company with her persecutor, a few minutes suffice to conduct her to her lodgings.

The attempt that De Mara would have made to follow her into her apartment was checked by her at length breaking silence. "Farewell count!" cried she, with a firmness of manner that surprised him—"farewell, for we are destined to meet no more!"

But it was De Mara's game to treat all that had happened with that air of levity which fairly belongs to a thing of course, and in no way unusual. And he replied accordingly—"My dear Madeline, what strange caprice is this? I thought we had understood each other too well for such freaks as these to arise on either side."

"Freaks! Oh, merciful Heaven! is that the name by which the tyrant would designate his cruelty! But let it pass; I was born to be the doomed companion of misery, and the lot of the wretch is to suffer."

"For shame, for shame, dearest!" replied the count; "you were born to be my heart's sovereign. But something has ruffled you: when you have slept upon it, you will perceive that it is some misapprehension that has been exercising its power over you, and your present angry feelings will have passed away."

"The anger, count, may have passed away, but I never can forget that he who should have been every thing to me has offered a volunteer insult to one who should on all accounts have been the receiver of his most cherished attentions."

"I protest," cried De Mara, "I hardly know to what you are referring. And how I have offered insult to my dearest Madeline must remain unknown to all who are not in the secret of the chimeras of her own brain."

"O man! man!—would you add insult to what is already beyond my powers of endurance? But leave me, for Heaven is my witness I never desire your presence again; and Mademoiselle Basault," added the girl bitterly, "will be angry when she misses you from her side."

"Mademoiselle Basault! how absurd! can Madeline for a moment suppose that the most fickle of mankind—to be sure the girl has a rich and spirit-stirring eye, and her soft lip seems in perpetual agitation as though a thousand cupids were making them their place of rendezvous."

"Sir, I beg that it may be understood that these are my apartments, and that I would be alone. At least I have the right to command your absence, though it appears that any other power I might have foolishly supposed I possessed over you is nugatory and futile."

"Ah, Madeline, why such pains to make yourself believe what your heart each moment contradicts?—in spite of yourself, you are not able even for a moment to doubt your empire over me; and though I may have devoted to-morrow to the service of the *jolie demoiselle*, you feel too thoroughly

to need any assurance from me, that my every moment and every movement are completely at your command."

"I am glad," replied his mistress, "that Count de Mara is able to blind his own conscience so well; but go, sir, go to your new-found favourite—render her your service of to-morrow, and let each succeeding day be another to-morrow for her. I resign the empty claim I once thought I had, and only pray that she may not have reason, as I have, to curse the dav that first introduced her to De Mara."

"Oh, the ways of women," answered De Mara; "he who shall say that he is wise, and has tracked them through all their varieties, shall be set down in my calendar for the chief of fools, and wear the cap for ever beyond all hope of redemption. I thought I knew the heart of one woman at least, but it was as though I would have counted the grains as they run through an hour-glass, and I now rise from the deception only to know that I know nothing."

"Nothing indeed do you know, if you can for a moment imagine that it is in human nature to have relied with the fondest confidence, and at last awake to the sense of that confidence having been given to something more fickle than the winds. Such is my unhappy lot—lot most miserable, that has betrayed me to myself, and sacrificed my happiness at the shrine of my self-esteem. But, never, oh, never, shall such a casket be re-opened:—I shut it from this moment against the world, and though the heart that it contains may moulder and become as dust, at least its last great pang of agony has been endured, and will have taught it how to suffer that which yet remains to complete its trial."

"But, dearest Madeline, at least let the subject be fairly brought to an issue."

"I have heard too much of it already," replied the maiden; "rather let it be buried deep as the bosom can entomb it. Remember, count, it was I that gave you my heart: it is you that have thrown it away; for the dedication of even a moment's service to another: in the manner you proffered yours this evening to Mademoiselle Basault is the unfailing signal of the gift being despised. Let us part:—I pray it—I command it; and never again shall so worthless a thing be tendered to your thoughts."

"Well, well," cried the count, "I will not argue the subject further now, for I see that you are peremptory against me. To-morrow—or the next day at farthest—I trust your candour will afford me an opportunity of showing you that every thing of which you complain ought to be set down to the account of mere badinage, and that Mademoiselle Basault, however bright her eyes or soft her cheeks, has not made me the disloyal knight you would imagine." And then, as if fearing that his further stay might urge his incensed mistress to pronounce a positive refusal to his request of being allowed to see her again, he bowed a hasty adieu, and quitted her for the night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Déjà des larmes!—Voilà toujours ce qui suit ce maudit sentiment qui plaît tant aux femmes!—PAUL DE KOCK.

MADELINE by these events found herself again involved in all the wretchedness that attends the war of the passions, when set against each other in the battle-field of the human soul. She loved De Mara—how deeply and entirely she had never known till then that the question of se-

paration was presented to her mind: she loved him—she hated him too—strange but natural product of the conflict of feeling that was going on within! When she thought of the charms of his person and of the still more winning charms of his conversation and manners, the tenderness of her soul would overflow in tears, till they were dried up by the withering parching thought that he had turned traitor, and that those, his charms, had been the fatal instruments of the despair she felt at that act of abandonment. Then it was that the ardour of her sensations was roused to its highest: she burned with indignant anger and hatred, and that desperate feeling which makes the present every thing, and shuts out the future from the faintest particle of hope. To think that she had confessed the pure affections of her virgin heart to one who had worn them as a bauble, and got tired of the trinket;—to remember she had doated—alas, still doated on a man who was the creature of a new face, and who forgot those heaven-registered vows that had won her to confession on the flitting of a fresh beauty before his greedy and inconstant view;—it was madness—more than madness to be possessed of such thoughts, and the whole faculties sank impotent beneath them. She had given tears to the first sensations that had come over her, but for these she had nothing but the silent horror of despair.

But can hope no where creep in? The wretch that is being drawn on the hurdle towards the place of execution, strains his ear to the last for the faint cry of reprieve from the travel-strained horseman, and, in listening for that which is not, will not see the ignominious preparations for death that stare him in the face;—the death-marked patient swallows the doctor's pills—profoundly concocted of learning and uselessness—hopes, takes, expects, swallows, and dies, with the precious balsam safe lodged within his diaphragm;—the storm-beaten sailor hears the groaning planks of his vessel splinter and give way as each billow drives her further on the reef where all has struck save hope, and yet still fancies he can see by the lightning's mysterious flash a craggy corner of the rock, which, gained, were safety come again. Can hope, then, no where creep in for poor Madeline?

Did he not say that he would return?—Did he not talk of her candour? of appealing to it? Oh! that it were possible she might have misjudged the scene that was played before her aching senses! Was it possible? Might it be possible?—The thought perhaps gave the slightest whispering of comfort to her heart: but—no, if it did, it was a fallacy, and she would not confess it to herself.

At all events it never should be in De Mara's power to reproach her with want of candour. She would see the traitor once again, though heart, soul, and sense were stung to agony for it. Yes, once again, though his defence could be nought.

There was something in the determination of permitting another interview that appeased her feelings. It gave no pleasure;—pleasure was to be hers no more—but it softened pain, and her heart was relieved by mere comparison, as he who suffers the long night through with horrid cramps, and on their surcease finds the agony reduced to one universal ache, feels a strange and unusual satisfaction at the compromise.

The next day, therefore, she was full of expectation for the arrival of De Mara. She pictured to herself the various positions he would assume; she framed for him speeches—soothing, excusing, palliating, beseeching; and the effort yielded a precious balm to her wounded spirit. Guilty he had been; but as she coined apologies for him, and clothed them in the magic of his syren tongue, the devil that racked her gasped for his empire, and there was still a wayward vision of possible excuse for him fitfully coming across her.

But the day crept on.—Oh! how slow the hours! each minute, like the seaman's leaden plummet, sank into the depths of her heart, and showed the fulness of the waters of affliction. De Mara came not. Yet surely he would come:--even though it were true he had engaged himself to Mademoiselle Basault, he would find a little hour for his poor Madeline, and have mercy on the misery of her condition.

So passed the whole of that day—De Mara, ever expected, never coming; and Madeline, silent and still as the heavy shadow of a sepulchre, listening for the anticipated sound—listening only to be disappointed.

The next morning promised better things. His faith was bound to that day; his word was upon it, and though it might be his intention to break those vows that Heaven had witnessed and Madeline had received, he never would be so forgetful of the world's punctilios as to give promise of a mere fact, and do away with its performance. Let him but come with tender soothings on his lips, and the wonted look of love that had become part of her very existence, and she would forget all. A single glance should convey the whole of her reproaches; and if he could not trace enough to vex his heart by gazing on the stamp of wretchedness that was established on her anxious visage, her lips should never be forced to the task of pourtraying that delirium of torture which had been her portion since that fatal night.

The same fixed statue that she was yesterday, she appeared again to-day. Without motion she sat, and her whole soul did nothing but listen, till the well-known step should be heard that gave her pledge of his approach.

At length she hears a voice below. That voice she imagines she could have recognised amid the outcry of a Babel myriad.—The step too—it is the same light buoyant tread she had often listened to with rapture, but which now comes over her with a heart-sickening, as if the stake that was about to be played was too much for her energies.

De Mara enters—but not alone! For a moment there is a dizzy something before her eyes that prevents her recognition of her companion. He speaks, and her ear and eye at the same moment make her acquainted with the intruder.

"It is our dear Mademoiselle Basault," said he; "I would take no denial, but insisted on her coming to make your better acquaintance."

It was indeed she. But what could her presence mean? Was it not enough that this intruder had been forced by the count's behaviour into the chamber of her soul, but must she also be made privy to the solitude of her agony?

De Mara himself, full of resolution as he was to go through with the scene, quailed before the sudden change of aspect in Madeline. On his entry he found her countenance tutored by a meek and candid breathing of the soul, as if willing to hear aught that should extenuate the cruel course he had pursued. But the introduction of Mademoiselle Basault had lighted the torch of war through her whole frame, and fearfully did it blaze a thousand beacons from her flashing eye.

The tempest scarcely threatened ere it burst. "Is this well!" cried Madeline, and as she spoke, her voice proclaimed a fellow-feeling with the spirit that was rife in every trait of her countenance—"Is this well!"—or is it not soulless and most pitiful to crush the victim, and then bring your agent to feast upon her struggles. Henceforth you will do well to forget that you are a man; for the rest of mankind, when this tale is known, will register you with those prowlers of the desert that steal through the mists of night to dart upon their helpless prey."

"Heavens, Madeline!" cried De Mara, "you do not understand—"

Madeline interrupted him—"Too well I understand! Oh that those

gifts of Heaven which enable me to do so—were extinct within me, that I might lie down, and know not what thought or recollection was. Is this the battle you wage with a poor unprotected girl? or will not mere war satisfy you, that you must thus creep in imbush upon the innocent, and, taking advantage of her simple faith, make her fall before your ruthless ally?"

"Believe me dear madam," cried the astonished Mademoiselle Basault, "I am no party to this;—I do not even understand what it means."

Madeline looked in her face, and her tone altered. "I do believe you," at length said she, in a solemn voice; "and I pity you the more. Beware in time of his voice of poisoning music—dread his blandishments, more treacherous than the snake's dread rattle, with which he fascinates his victim. You have known him but a short time, and may throw off his unholy charms; I have been the betrayed of a season, and am fast locked to my mistake."

"Believe me, Madeline," cried De Mara, offering to take her hand—

"Do not touch me," said she, and she spoke with a wild vehemence of gesture; "you have touched my soul, and it is withered;—would you also unnerve my corporeal frame? I confided in you, and you have betrayed me. My heart believed in your love, and was proud to love in return. Alas, its pride is humbled;—its spirit is entombed in the den of despair!"—and then, as if unable longer to endure the feeling that was upon her, she rushed from the apartment, and sought the sanctity of her own chamber.

De Mara, whatever might have been his expectations from the progress of his plot, had anticipated no such result as this. His object had been to awaken alarm in the bosom of his mistress—but he feared he had far overstepped that boundary, and hurried her into the fierceness of hatred and despair: and as he winded his solitary way, after having seen the innocent instrument of his stratagem to her carriage, he was fain to confess to himself, that he had not yet arrived to the extent of his knowledge of women, for there was something in the character of Madeline that was still beyond his interpretation, and that even threatened to baffle all his skill, and render the most wily outlayings of his genius of intrigue nugatory and of no avail.

The place soon became as dreary a solitude as the orphan could wish. De Mara and Mademoiselle Basault departed. Albert was straying in some unfrequented place full of his own strange thoughts, and with still more strange discoveries, hitherto unknown in the world of physical or moral science, ready to rush in upon him;—and Madeline wandered about her apartments, uninterrupted by aught save the bitterness of her spirit, which rendered her heart a sort of moral blasted heath where nothing green or refreshing could prosper.

The more she dwelt upon De Mara's conduct, the more it resolved itself into his having determined to desert her for the new impression which Mademoiselle Basault's charms had made upon him. But even then the introduction of his new-made mistress that morning was inexplicable, unless, indeed, she had entirely mistaken his character for amenity, and he had at bottom a reckless brutality that led him to be unsparing and unceasing in the pain he inflicted. Yet it must be so, for there was no other solution to the riddle that had marred her happiness. And why should she not have mistaken his character in one point as well as another? Two days ago, the visit of an archangel would not have persuaded her that De Mara was a traitor to the truth of love: he alone was able to do that, and most bitterly had he accomplished it. Why then was she to give him credit for the other excellences with which she had heretofore thought him endowed? Urbanity and gentleness were surely more easily assumed than the mere heart-connected devotions of affection; in the latter he had proved himself a delinquent, and she now cared but little whether his whole conduct was one universal cheat.

Such was her reasoning; or rather, such was the rational portion of her thoughts, weeded from the tumultuous assemblage of the fast-gathering phantasmata that pressed upon her brain and hurried her to the verge of madness. Creatures like this orphan, the chief of whose actions are dictated by the spirit of impulse, are prone to hate or to love, and the sudden check of the latter sensation is often productive of a fearful re-action in favour of the former. The fit was upon Madeline; and it seemed as if the only way to save her heart from bursting was to precipitate its emotions into the whirlpool that that re-action had produced. It is in the nature of no woman tamely to endure a slighted love; but when that slight is leashed to a carking insult in its mode of conveyance, the arrow rankles with tenfold pang in her bosom. Madeline felt all this in its extremity. What could this forcing her to meet her rival face to face be but insult the most premeditated? It was a silent but most undisguised way of announcing that all pledges were broken, all bonds were burst asunder, and it was summoning into her presence the most hateful of all witnesses to testify their fragility.

When hatred supersedes love, the step to revenge is easy; and Madeline admitted this last feeling with much more facility than she had strung her heart to hate. It is a sort of self-immolating exertion to teach the mind to turn the soft and milder tenderings of our nature into those stern and bitter feelings that lie beneath, ready to be aroused at the bidding of our baser share of Adam's portion; but the devil once aroused, he strides on with rapid pace, and at a far more easy price than the first outwork cost, takes possession of all that remains. His flag is up—his beacon is a-blaze—and the whole heart crouches to his sovereignty.

Thus it was with Madeline. It was not her bad nature that had brought her to this; but it was her temper that had stirred up the more secret recesses of her soul, where so much of that human portion of mischief that fell to her share had hitherto lain dormant. The particle, born of sin, winced at the keen spur of the passion that was on her, and, shaking itself from the heavy sleep in which from her birth it had been buried, it addressed itself with fearful eagerness to the labour that was bidden.

But what was she?—a poor weak orphan, unknowing and unknown! What her adversary?—a man subtle in acts, powerful in fortune, and one who was full of the world's wisdom and its finesses! Afflictions and dangers beset her; but that which could not be controlled urged her forward, and she was obedient to the call. Schemeless, and without chart, she looked around to see who might be her stead. None but poor Albert presented—and she shuddered at the thought of implicating him in the heart's quarrel that commanded her. A youth so gentle—of nature so kindly, and habits so winning of all men's affections—it was impossible. But still the cry of revenge was up in her soul; and ever as she dismissed the thought of summoning her brother to her councils, the influence under which she laboured brought him back again to her recollection as the only agent she could obtain. Her love for De Mara had been of that enthusiastic and single nature, that the benefits she might reap by her marriage with a man so favoured in worldly fortune had been no part of her contemplation: the only shape in which it had crept in, was, that it would enable her to promote Albert's welfare, and that he would cease to be an outcast entirely dependent on the aid that the absent, and apparently forgetful, Seaton might afford. This, with the rest of her pictures of bliss, had disappeared; and in her gloomy lucubrations she began to persuade herself, that as Albert would have partaken of her happiness, it was within justice that he should form part of her ruin. What the end of all was to be, she knew not. Death perhaps; and at the thought a faint smile of heaviness stole into her countenance. Why then should she wish to leave Albert

behind to battle with the world that seemed to bless the bad, and thunder anathemas against the innocent? Yes, hand in hand they had passed through life. There could be no pang in their continuing so to the death.

When the sophistry of her diseased mind had brought her to this, it seemed as if her impatience to concert measures with Albert could not brook an instant's delay. She wanted execution not only to wait on conception, but be co-instant with it. Of late she had not particularly noted her brother's habits or mode of passing his time. The perfection of his aural sense had rendered him capable of performing his own behests; and a general understanding that he was in all things gratifying his own inclinations, had satisfied her sisterly care. But now that she had enlisted him as the right-hand of her movement against De Mara, every action of his became of importance to her, every step he took vital; and she awaited his return home with all that feverish anxiety which attends upon the mind when fixed upon one single unalterable intent, and balked as yet of its accomplishment.

It was nearly midnight before Albert arrived at his lodgings. Madeline, who had long expected him, guessed that the solitary step that rung through the deserted street was his, and she hurried to the door to hail his approach. There was a strange contrast between the orphans at the moment of their meeting. Albert's open countenance, flushed by the night-breeze, shone cheerily and brisk, while expectation, lighted by the soul's pure fire, stood mantling in his eye. How different were Madeline's features! There a never-ceasing range of tormenting passions had been flitting to and fro for two whole days; her cheek glared with a hectic colour, and spoke of pain's dominion, sleep's absence, and despair's triumph;—her brow (of old so fine, so marble-like, so dazzling) was cast into wrinkles, in each of which sat ghastly phantoms blabbing the struggle that was rife within;—her eye, sanguinary and blood-shot, had something in its character unearthly and appalling; it was as though those who should have gazed upon it would have suffered some fatal penalty, like the audacious of antiquity who dared to face the frantic Medusan head.

During the whole of those two days, Albert had not seen his sister—not from any want of affection—but his whole faculty had been deep in the mystic idea that had taken possession of his brain; and strange and indescribable sensations had told him that the hour was at hand for that discovery which for nearly a month had been vibrating in his soul, and during which period he had been like Macbeth, grasping at something which to the world was air-born and unembodied, but to his own sense most real and existent. With this one idea the vessel of his mind had been filled; a single drop, and it would overflow.

As he gained the door, he raised his eye and caught the first glimpse of the strange expression that dwelt paramount in Madeline's countenance. What it was he saw there, it is not in man's power to describe: Albert could not himself have defined it. But whatever it might be, it supplied the link that was wanting. The drop was added—the cup overflowed—and the vast incomprehensibility for which his soul had yearned—for which his intellect had striven—was made clear to his senses; the mysterious attribute was his.

He clenched his forehead with his feverish palm as though staggering under the prodigious magnitude of the burden. Again and again he pressed his burning brow, and felt that it was safe locked within the fortresses of his brain. But with another glance of that strange unutterable impress that dwelt in Madeline's face, he would not trust himself. "Farewell! Farewell!" he cried, and in a moment was lost to her view through the heavy shadows of the night.

CHAPTER XIX.

Herm. Hate him! my injured honour bids me hate him!
The ungrateful man to whom I fondly gave
My virgin heart; the man I loved so dearly—
The man I doated on! Oh, my Cleone,
How is it possible I should not hate him!
Cleo. Then give him over, Madam.—DISTRESSED MOTHER.

MADELINE, the prey of every gloom-inspiring feeling, passed the night amid a whirl of resolutions, that rather took the shape of the wild chimeras of a passion-driven brain than the rational conclusions of a consecutive mind. What the sudden departure of Albert—no sooner come than gone—might mean, she knew not; but it almost seemed as if that strange one glance he had thrown upon her distracted countenance, had informed him of the desperate design she had formed of mixing him in the catastrophe that was pending, and in good time he had fled to save himself from so dreadful an inveiglement.

With the morning he returned. Madeline, still at her painful vigils, heard his foot upon the stairs, and, as he entered the chamber, expected to see his visage marked with that which should tell her he had come to resist her design to the uttermost, and to battle against her intention to the last. But there was no such lineament in the whole of his face serene. Smiles, mingled with something above human mien, were stationed there in easy enthronement; his eye "with a fine phrenzy rolling" spoke of satisfied enjoyment, and entire possession of the spirit that lent it its wondrous lustre; and his whole manner was that of one who had received some blessing beyond value, and was willing to make one universal jubilee, that all hearts might be gladsome as his own.

"I do not know," cried he, as he met her earnest gaze, "what I am to say to you in extenuation of the strange manner in which I behaved last night: let my sister believe that the impulse that was on me was irresistible; though even that hardly forms an excuse to my own heart for having slighted my dearest Madeline so uncouthly."

The maiden listened to the words that fell from her brother, and when he paused, still remained as though she would have heard further: they were the first words of consolation that had crossed her since the fatal night of the ball, and it seemed as if their influence was pouring a grateful comfort into her harassed bosom. The action of the youth was suitable to the tenor of his speech: he threw his arms round her neck, and embraced her with tenderness.

"Nay," said she, with a slight shudder, "you should not kiss me. *He* was wont to kiss me; and as he pressed my blushing cheek to his, it was then that I felt my heart going from me. It was by those kisses he betrayed me. You will not betray me, my Albert! But do not kiss me, or I shall fancy I see treason in the act"—and as she spoke, the big tears, pure as the mountain stream, supplied from the snow-thawed reservoirs on high, made watercourses of her cheeks:—the snow of her heart melted before the sun of Albert's tenderness, and the over-pent stream found outlet at her eyes.

"What means my sister?" exclaimed Albert, shocked at the sight before him. "Who is he of whom you speak?—Is it—can it be—"

"Oh, do not give utterance to that name!—Vain fool that I was, I

thought but awhile ago that I had strung my soul to iron hatred and despair, and I vowed a vow to my heart that it never again should be called on for a tear. Alas, he has taught me how to break vows, or like himself, my heart is traitor too, and gives the tribute I would have forbidden."

"Madeline, dear Madeline," cried the youth, "speak all, I pray you—all, for nature is in a wild and indefinable ferment beyond my own control. I have been feasting my soul with food beyond its strength, and it is reeling beneath the burden. Feel thou here, my sister," and he placed her hand upon his forehead, which burned as though indeed some fever-furnace raged within—"feel thou here, and learn that time will allow no hesitation. Speak all, I say, lest the strung soul snap and all intellect give way."

Madeline was taken for a moment from her own circle of sorrows by the overbearing influence of her brother's words and actions. It was as though the spirit, instinct in his bosom, struck a kindred chord in hers, and the two were vibrating in unison.

"I have told the whole already," cried the girl in a hurried accent; "De Mara is a traitor, and Madeline a wretch!"

"Wretch—Wretch!" echoed Albert; "why that word? you would not say that he has—" the word seemed to sink to his soul rather than come for utterance to his lips, as he whispered—"triumphed?"

"He has triumphed here," said Madeline, and she placed her hand to her heart: "but though he has taught it to love untowardly, I thank my God it was not his to make it beat impurely."

"My sister, my own dear sister, pardon—pardon—that for a moment I dared harbour so unholy a surmise."

Madeline wept on: that which might elsewhere have roused the over-ardent tenor of her disposition, came from Albert so gently, and was excused so self-condemningly, that she could not do other than answer him with tears.

"Cheerily, cheerily," he continued, "*my* heart is bounding again with lightsome spirit. Feel my brow once more; the unnatural, maddening heat, that seemed to consume the whole to ashes, is away, and a refreshing coolness has possession of its place. Through life we have been as one—let it be so still."

There was something in these words that jarred on Madeline's soul: they brought back the headlong resolution she had formed, and again it reigned paramount over all other.

"Albert," cried she, "you have said that which I dared not utter. The wounded spirit of a slighted woman calls for revenge. Shall we, indeed, be one in that? It is this single feeling that predominates in my heart, and I would link my spirit with yours to compass the sweet intoxicating measure. Give me your hand."

"In pledge of what?" demanded he.

"In pledge of a union of revenge," replied the other vehemently;—"in pledge that life nor death—world's wit nor world's torture—man's strength nor devil's art, shall withhold us from that one object. Let our bond be De Mara's fall, and the rest to your own shape and fancy."

"Madeline," cried Albert solemnly, "it cannot be! I should hold my life cheap to give your heart content. But it is not you who are calling for this act of sin; it is a wily demon that has crept in, and when his fell purpose is worked to a completion, he would leave you to the horrors of remorse, that would make you hateful to yourself, and me a blight-bearing curse to your sight."

"Revenge!" muttered Madeline, "revenge!"

"Leave De Mara to high Heaven. His appointed time will come," said the brother.

"You desert me then?"

"Never, while a living soul shall animate this body. It is at this moment I am best proving my adherence. Were I a coward to my post, I should give way to the horrid phantom that has momentary empire over you—not withstand its march, like the trusty sentinel of my own sister's dearest hopes. Could you read the whole book of my mind at this instant, how eminently clear would this be to you! Its first and chiefest page is graven with strange characters, that pourtray matters the world of man has not yet so much as imagined."

"Albert!" cried his bewildered sister.

"Yes," replied he, "I speak in all the sincerity of honest faith. I have that within that passeth the wisdom of philosophy, or the hope of the most speculative enthusiast. The film of obscurity has been removed from my senses, and I walk erect in the plenitude of a discovery which—"

He paused. Madeline, once more drawn from her own feelings by the mysterious emphasis of his manner, listened with breathless spirit to his words.

"Why do you pause?" whispered she.

"The season is not yet come. Nor should thus much have been said but that I would convince you of the earnestness of my affection for you. Is not such a mystery as this, at which I have hinted, enough to take a man's whole soul into bondage without even sparing the iota of a thought for aught else? Half an hour ago I could have sworn it. But the cry of my sister in distress was heard amid the wilderness of my ideas, and I gave up the heaven of my own imagination that I might comfort her. Be wise, be wise, my Madeline; cast from you the desperate delusion that passion has hung up before the eyes of your mind, and let the heart of your brother be a pillow on which your wounded spirit may lie and receive the balm of assuagement."

Madeline listened to his words, and drooped her head in silence. It was too much to hope that the stormy turmoil of her soul could be allayed by the soothing of even such a brother; but her heart, in spite of herself, confessed that it was the most genuine affection that taught his tongue to speak; and though she refused to forego what was still the fixed purpose of her heart, she could not do other than bow before the suavity of his advice, and even let in some small particle of admission that it was possible that his dictates were those of rectitude and sobriety, and, as such, had a right to be listened to.

While her mind was in this sort of bewilderment, a letter was brought to her. A single glance at the superscription was sufficient to inform her who was the writer. It was from De Mara; and though her spirit was on fire to be acquainted with the contents, there was a lingering in her movements that showed as if some latent and indefinable sensation held her back. There appeared a nervous dread upon her, lest the contents should trench too much either one way or the other. She feared lest they might, on the one hand, drag her back to those desperate remedies her diseased imagination had so lately entertained, but the force of which was somewhat obliterated by the affectionate remonstrances of her brother; or that they should, on the other, awaken in her heart those tender recollections which she had vainly hoped to extinguish, and the flame of which, though subdued, was still sufficiently potent to be ready each instant to break forth afresh in spite of the hate that had accumulated in her bosom. Nor was this all. Not only did she fear either of these alternatives, but the fever of her mind had been so great, and had endured so many hours, that she felt a sort of gloomy satisfaction at the doubtful stillness into which it had been thrown through Albert's resistance, and she wished for nothing more than to be allowed to continue in that apathy of spirit which

was a kind of paradise when compared to the racking turmoil that had previously existed. She was in that sort of condition to which the winter-facing traveller is exposed, who, overtaken by the bleak and nipping influence of the north, sinks gradually into a state of insensibility, and whose first sensation, on being roused from his dangerous torpidity, is that of sorrow at being disturbed.

The letter was still trembling in her hand, when at length, as if glad of having found a step intermediate, she hurridly exclaimed, "Do you read it, my Albert."

The youth was not much in love with the task he was called upon to perform, for he feared that the contents, whatever they might be, could only serve to disturb the promising tranquillity of his sister; still he knew not how to excuse himself, and he therefore took the paper that was tendered to him, and, having opened it, read as follows:—

"My best Madeline—Twenty times have I begun this letter, and twenty times have I thrown aside the pen, despairing of any adequate power to express the grief my heart entertains at having been the innocent cause of such a scene as that which took place yesterday. I will not attempt a word of defence, only insisting on this—that on the faith of a gentleman, the motive you would have imputed to me is utterly unfounded. That there was a motive, cannot be denied; but I feel, that after what has taken place, it would be grievous to both to enter upon a point that these events have proved may be so easily misunderstood.

"Let then the past be forgotten; and if a contrite heart, joined with the most fervent assurance that you have indeed mistaken me, may claim so much—let it also be forgiven.

"A word—a look—a token from you will summon me to your side, where to prove the sincerity of his devotion will ever be the grateful labour of

"Your now unhappy
"De Mara."

Madeline listened to these words with strange and overpowering emotion. Her young bosom heaved high with palpitation, her varying cheek bespoke the still more rapid change of thoughts that were passing within, and her eye streamed a thousand different expressions as she caught her breath to hear each syllable more acutely and intensely. When the youth had finished, with quick and trembling hand she snatched the paper from him, and her eye ran anxiously over it—no sooner ending, than once again beginning, as though each time of perusal was to present some new change of expression.

"'That there was a motive, cannot be denied;' what may that mean?" cried she; but her voice showed that though there was still a tinge of suspicion in her heart, it was fast relapsing into the former affection of her nature.

"It means nothing," cried Albert; "at least you ought to think so, if you have faith in his assurances."

"Ask not such a question, for it will harrow me to the inmost corner of my heart. In whom am I to have faith? I thought in my despair that all the world was leagued in treachery against me: but the letter has fair promises in it, and yet I would not again be fooled to my own destruction."

"Then give up your extremes for once, my sister," replied Albert with a smile. "Let your love and your hate be tutored to sobriety, instead of running riot in the unhallowed excess of furious passions."

Madeline looked grave, but she said nothing. At another time such words would have roused her to indignation; but the weight of her own

grief was bearing down the fire of her spirit, and the mystery of Albert's previous words still rang in her ears, and excited in her mind a sensation towards him that almost amounted to awe.

The brother continued: "De Mara was too easily received as a lover to make him feel the full estimate of the favour. Not that I would say all men should be kept in check, but there is a boldness in the character of this nobleman—I might almost say, an audacity—that requires repression rather than encouragement. He has, however, found a place in your heart; and, whatever may be my own feeling towards him, it never shall be act of mine to wean you from him. But I may at least advise that, as the opportunity now serves, it should be embraced, to throw an embarrassment over those steps that are to lead to a reconciliation, by which means your own consistency will be better preserved, and his pretensions receive a salutary warning."

And with these words Albert left his sister to her own meditations. They were of a much more cheering tenor than those to which she had been prisoner for the last two or three days. The heart that has loved, even when repudiated, has still a lurking after the former object of its affections, and ever acknowledges a yearning to possess its pristine happiness. De Mara's former glories gradually brightened in effect on Madeline's mind, but the parting words of her brother had not been without their effect too, and she resolved to tutor her disposition to a more chary display of the sentiments that lurked within.

It was while indulging in such reflections as these that another letter was brought to her. It was from Mademoiselle Basault, and she read it thus:—

"My dear madam,—The painful scene of yesterday irresistibly impels me to address you on the subject, though I hardly know whether I shall be assisting your happiness by it. But at all events I cannot stand acquitted in my own conscience, unless I afford you such explanation as it is in my power to offer. In the first place, I beg to assure you most sincerely that the count De Mara has no pretensions to claim any portion of my heart. It is a painful thing for a young female to speak of these things, but I know not how otherwise than by so open a declaration to meet the charge that you insinuated. You will probably be convinced of its truth, when I state (confidentially) that I am actually under promise of marriage to a young gentleman of this city, and only wait till he shall have been fortunate enough to obtain the consent of my parents for our union to take place.

"With respect to the behaviour of Count De Mara, I do not pretend to judge of it. But it may assist you in forming your opinion on that head, to be made acquainted that it was under pretence (not absolutely so spoken but insinuated) of an invitation from you, that he persuaded me to pay that visit which raised such groundless apprehensions in your breast. Of course, I now easily perceive that this was the offspring of some deep finesse on his part; but how could I guess it on its original suggestion? What the object of that finesse may be, it is impossible for me to pronounce. The only thing that presents itself as a clue to my mind, is a word that he dropped after your hasty departure from the room, which seemed to imply that he had looked for jealousy, not for such deep-seated anger.

"I beg you to receive my most earnest assurances, that I would not for worlds have undertaken any thing unpleasant to your feelings, much less of a nature to give rise to such bitter emotions, as those which I unfortunately witnessed yesterday. I shall ever feel myself under the most sincere obligations to you for the kind relief you afforded me in my time of necessity, and hold myself in the bond of gratitude as long as memory endures.

"Allow me to add, that never to a living creature will I breathe one syllable of the painful interview that took place yesterday. Believe me, dear madam,

"Your most faithful friend and servant,

"ADELINE BASAULT."

Here was food enough to supply Madeline with a world of new thoughts, and it was long that she pondered on the subject. But whatever direction her conjectures took, they still returned to the clue that was suggested by the letter of Mademoiselle Basault. When in the heat of her anger, and the excitement of her disappointment, she had first surveyed De Mara's conduct, she could find no solution to the riddle but that of his dereliction of faith, and her own desertion in favour of a more fortunate rival. This mode of accounting for the events that had happened was now happily set aside, and not all her woman's wit could furnish her with a more just or a more probable motive for what had taken place, than that which was insinuated by her fair correspondent—rival, now no longer.

In obedience to this feeling, the course she inclined to adopt again changed its aspect, and she found in her present view of the matter an additional incentive to act according to the wish of her brother, by holding the count at bay till she had taken full revenge upon him for the means he had pursued to try her affections. But with these sentiments in her mind, she once more found herself in the same difficulty that had presented itself when her thoughts were of a more gloomy cast, and she was looking round to see who should abet her in enabling her to satiate the cravings of her anger and despair. In that instance, she had, by a compulsion of the mind, brought herself to the resolution that Albert should be that agent; but, in the present position of the affair, his aid could be of no avail. There was nothing in the presence of her brother calculated to alarm the jealous fears of the count, and it could only be by making that nobleman believe that his place in her heart was likely to be supplied, that she could expect to afford him a proportionate castigation for the pain he had so gratuitously inflicted upon her.

Indeed, she hardly knew, even if she succeeded in this counterplot to her fullest content, whether it would be sufficient to appease the laceration that had been so wantonly dealt out to her by De Mara; and the recollection of what she had suffered was only got over so easily by the secret whispering of her hope that, though the infliction had visited her most grievously, its intention had been grounded on a real, but mistaken spirit of affection, that had become alarmed at some needless and insufficient cause; on which account her lover, in spite of his ill-judged machinations, was entitled to some sort of pity at her hands.

Where then was this new agent to be found? Whom could she so cunningly engraft upon her scheme, so that neither of the parties that were to be played off against one another might suspect the reality of her intentions? It was in vain that she ransacked her brain—it was in vain that she taxed her ingenuity—she could fix upon no one that seemed calculated to meet her object, and over whom she possessed sufficient influence to keep him in play at her bidding. It happened, however, with Madeline, as it has happened with some of the greatest geniuses to whom the world has been indebted for some of the chief discoveries it now enjoys. Where their own wit has failed them, chance has stood their friend in its stead. Archimedes knew not how to satisfy the Sicilian tyrant's question on his crown of gold, till the chance of a bath instructed him; and in like manner our own great Newton made one of his most important discoveries through the chance of an apple:—the mystery of the telescope takes its origin from the chance of a game of children, and that of the power of steam from the chance of an

old woman's carelessness. So Madeline's success in obtaining such an agent, as the one for whom she had in vain searched every cranny of her brain, arose from an accident of Albert. A few words will suffice to relate it. After the youth had quitted his sister, he went forth into the beautiful scenery that surrounds Geneva, partly for the purpose of indulging his own chain of day-dreams, which composed his chief delight, and partly that he might not have another interview with her till she had had time to retrieve the calmness of her mind, and to take its counsel as to her future proceeding. Without hardly knowing which way he wandered, chance led him to take the road to Unwalden. But he was there unconsciously:—deeply buried in his own thoughts, he looked neither to the right nor the left; and however much he might have attracted the attention of any passengers, they got neither observation nor comment from him in return.

But on a sudden he was roused from his reflections; "Albert! Albert Schvolen! can it be, indeed?" cried some one near at hand.

He looked up, and perceived at his elbow a man on horseback, with whose face he was familiar: a moment's reflection told him it was Wahrend, his old friend of Unwalden. A speedy and affectionate greeting took place on both sides, and the horseman seemed never tired of asking particulars about Madeline, and congratulating her brother on the perfection of his sense of hearing.

Wahrend's repeated inquiries about Madeline recalled to Albert's mind the state in which he had left her, and caused him to ask himself the question how far it might be advisable to take their old friend home to her. As to the exact nature of the intimacy that had existed between them at Unwalden, he was not very well aware. His deafness at that period had always prevented his knowing any thing about it, further than that they had seemed fond of being together in their walks and pursuits; and though he had seen enough of their farewell interview to know that Madeline had given the Swiss an angry dismissal, much of that had been attributed by Albert to the peculiar state of mind in which his sister was at that moment owing to the departure of Seaton, and not to any withdrawal of her friendship towards her companion. It was not often since that time that Wahrend's name had been mentioned; but whenever such an incident had occurred, Madeline had spoken of him with a kind feeling, and a sort of regret, as if she had parted from him somewhat too harshly; and Albert even remembered that on one occasion De Mara had rallied his mistress on the expression she had made use of when dwelling on that regret. There was nothing, therefore, in any part of his reminiscences that was of a nature to induce Albert to believe that Wahrend would be an unwelcome guest to the maiden; and when he remembered the gloom and uneasiness of mind in which he had left her, he could not help thinking it might be possible that the presence of the new comer might serve to distract his sister's attention from the melancholy feelings that were pressing upon her, by leading her back to former scenes of happiness and juvenile recollections.

It was upon these considerations that he answered another—perhaps the fiftieth, inquiry of Wahrend concerning the welfare of Madeline, by proposing that he should make that inquiry of her in person.

"Nothing would give me greater delight," cried the Swiss eagerly; "if you dare give me encouragement to hope that I shall be a welcome visiter. You cannot altogether forget the way in which we parted. For myself, the recollection will be a drop of bitterness throughout my existence."

"Then the best way to get rid of it," replied Albert with a good-natured smile, "is by affording her an opportunity of recanting what she said. Rely upon it, what passed was under the irritation of the moment, and that a sincere welcome now awaits you."

"Do you indeed think so?" said Wahrend, and his eyes glistened with

the bare supposition. "I would give worlds, were they mine, once more to receive one word from her in token of friendship. Yes, only one last word —that I might be able to cling to that with pleasure, instead of, as now, having nothing but what is painful to recall."

The young man did not need much more of Albert's persuasion to induce him to accompany him home; and it would be difficult to tell which of the two experienced most sensations of delight on the road—Albert, at the thought that he was bringing one to his sister who would allay her grief, and divert its intensity—or Wahrend, who a thousand times had been tempted to seek Madeline, whose memory was indelibly imprinted on his heart, and who had as often been held back by the recollection of her parting moments, and the fears of still more irretrievably experiencing her displeasure.

They found Madeline in happy mood. Again and again had she been deliberating with herself which way she should turn to obtain that agent, which was so necessary for the prosecution of her scheme, and the last ray of hope had begun to sink in her bosom as they entered; so that her reception of Wahrend—in whom she instantly recognised the very instrument for whom she had so earnestly prayed—was more than either he or Albert had dared to expect: and the Swiss, to whom her silver tones of welcome poured out a music more delicious than his own native airs could afford to his patriotic bosom, was ready to worship the very ground on which she trod.

Albert himself was surprised at the warmth of her manner, and did not very well know how to interpret it. The countenance of his sister, however, was once again lighted up with smiles, and he was therefore easily satisfied with the result of his little project, without caring to dive very deeply into the cause. She had been miserable; she was now happy;—and content with that change, he again abandoned himself with redoubled fervour to his own mysterious sources of delight, which were fast locked within his own bosom, and from which nothing in the whole world, but the deep and palpable distress of a most dear sister, could have drawn him.

It was not long before Madeline found an opportunity of making Wahrend useful in her scheme against De Mara. That very evening, tempted by the serenity of the atmosphere, she proposed to her quondam and now revived associate a walk to the Plain Palais; by which means (even if she should not meet with the count) it might, at least, reach his ears that a new *cavalière servente* had made his appearance in her train.

But her success was every thing that she could wish, for they had not been on the Plain Palais above a few minutes, ere her quick and anxious eye perceived the count, promenading one of the public walks. This observation only made her more marked in her attention to the conversation of Wahrend; so that when De Mara was made aware that his mistress was present, he had also presented to his contemplation the peculiar inclination of her head, with which she pointed and gave effect to each remark the delighted Swiss offered to her notice. De Mara, whose first impulse was to advance to her side, hesitated for a minute, to consider whether the present was a favourable moment to offer those conciliatory apologies which his late defalcation so peremptorily required at his hands. Who the stranger that was with her could be, was beyond his ingenuity to conjecture; but, whoever he might be, De Mara could not help feeling not a little annoyance at the idea of making him a witness of those self-condemnatory explanations, by which alone he could hope to appease his mistress' offended feelings. But while this doubt had possession of his mind, Madeline settled the matter for him by meeting his eye, as it anxiously took survey of the situation in which it found her, and honouring him with a bow of good-humoured recognition. From such an acknowledgment on the part of the lady there was no retreating, and he therefore made his way to the spot where she was

sitting, preparing his tongue in the short minute the interval allowed with such silver eloquence, as he thought best calculated to win him a gracious pardon for his fault.

But it was no part of Madeline's plan to treat his last offence with severity —and still less did she wish that any thing should pass in the presence of Wahrend that might alarm his newly-revived sentiments of love, by leading him to conclude that De Mara's actions were of sufficient consequence to her to awaken either her anger or her joy; when, therefore, the count began a deprecating speech, she stopped him in a moment—

"Believe me," cried she, "the only way you can take to make the matter so serious as your face would describe it to be, is to say any thing more about it. I can assure you, the whole is forgotten by me, and only to be revived when you shall so will it;" and with these words she extended her hand to him in token of the sincerity of her meaning; but, at the same time, that she might not give him too much occasion to rejoice at the tenor of her speech, she returned to her conversation with Wahrend, and begged him to tell her what was thought at Unwalden of her not having made her re-appearance at the Single Cottage.

"What can they think?" returned he to whom the inquiry was addressed—"what can they think, but that the house which was formerly known as the pride of the place, is now the object of their sorrow. I passed it yesterday—all its gaiety and smiling front seemed to be gone, and even the beautiful clematis that was wont to climb the cottage side with a luxuriance that seemed to know and enjoy its privilege, now looks neglected and overspread with weeds."

"Ah, my poor clematis!" cried Madeline, with a sigh; "the time was when I should have resented it as an affront, had any one told me that my favourite shrub should suffer from my want of notice; but a day may come when all my old darlings will again be dear to me, and the sweet scenes of Unwalden again furnish peace to my heart."

"Happy will be the day when that shall come to pass," exclaimed the Swiss enthusiastically—"happy, thrice happy, those who shall have to welcome Madeline back to the scenes of her childhood."

De Mara had not yet interfered in the conversation, because he was willing to inform himself, if he could, from the nature of their observations, in what light he was to view this new comer, who seemed to be interposed between him and his mistress at a most critical period. The little he had already heard was by no means to his satisfaction; and he therefore determined to interpose as soon as he fairly could, and mix himself with what had been hitherto a *tête-à-tête* between the party he had joined.

The honest earnestness with which Wahrend had made his last exclamation had carried Madeline's mind still further back into those delightful thoughts that always attend the memory of the scenes of a happy childhood; and she exclaimed with nearly equal warmth to his own—"And happy as the day, and those by whom surrounded, shall I be when that time arrives. My whole heart is flooded with tender recollections, and even here I foretaste the joys that await me there."

"And can no place but Unwalden yield all these pleasures?" cried De Mara. "I should have thought that the world had more green spots than one, and that such a mind as Madeline's could have found happiness wherever smiles find her, and all hearts bow before her. Happy fate is hers, who, go where she will, forms her own circle of delights!"

"But may not some particuar spot," demanded Wahrend, somewhat hesitatingly, as if not knowing how to follow up so florid an attempt—"may not some particular spot have its peculiar claims, even where such queenship exists, and add to the other virtues that attend her?"

"I would not have it so at least," cried the count. "It is in my mind

little less than treason to imagine that any outward circumstances whatever could heighten the inward heaven that Madeline is able to assume. It is of herself, and from herself, that the whole source of happiness is derived; and to propose either addition or subtraction is to suppose that that source is not yet perfect and complete."

"Oh, count," exclaimed Madeline, "you are determined that I should proclaim you the prince of flatterers to all that hear you. What is my old companion—I may almost call him playmate, from Unwalden, to think of such flowers? or shall I bid him take a lesson and learn to emulate Count de Mara's flights and fictions?"

"I have no envy for the task," said Wahrend, "for our Swiss manners are somewhat too plain to follow such a track."

"I have heard as much before," exclaimed De Mara, drily.

"But, after all, it is the heart that forms the real criterion," returned Wahrend; "and in this it is like the human form:—trick it out ever so finely, the core and substance must still remain the same."

"Upon my word," cried Madeline with a smile, "I believe I must direct the lesson to go the other way: I have not heard Count De Mara so schooled in so few words before."

De Mara would have spoken, but she interrupted him.

"Nay, not yet," added she, "for your tutor has not wound up his instructions. We are all attention, Wahrend."

The count bit his lips, as he exclaimed, "O, pray do not trouble the young gentleman to extend his doctrine any further. I am afraid he will find me but a tardy scholar in *his* school of ethics."

"For shame!" replied the maiden; "we shall have rank rebellion next. Besides, I know Wahrend too well not to have full respect for his powers of eloquence. I have felt them myself," added she, with a half-bashful look, "and therefore cannot suppose that so excellent a man of the world as Count De Mara is less on the *qui vive* than myself."

The count's tone was somewhat bitterly inflated, as he answered:—"It may happen that the very eloquence that has suited you so well, may be found unpalatable to my less delicate apprehension."

"But surely," cried Madeline, "on my recommendation you will be willing to become apprentice to the wisdom of my *protegé*."

"It were hardly possible, madam, even on that footing; though it may be that we shall be able to hold an interview in some other way."

"Now, this from a man that bridled with pleasure four minutes ago, when I called him the prince of flatterers! Pray, count, where were you brought up, for your education must have been sadly neglected? Positively you should buy a tub, and set up as the modern Diogenes, for never again can you pretend to the *preux chevalier-ship* that I was so mistaken as to suppose was your right."

"I must always be content to assume any character that you may be pleased to bestow upon me," said the count, who though not exactly understanding the scene that was going on, found that it was necessary to stand on his guard. "What shall I call myself in future?—For it may be as well for me to know, as it seems my opinion is to be the same as yours, and I may by accident be asked the question when you are not at hand to answer for me."

"Why—why—as to that—I must take a night to think of it;—so, come, Wahrend; I summon you to my councils, and we will give his lordship the rendezvous to-morrow."

She was curtseying her farewell, when De Mara exclaimed in his most winning tone, "Perhaps it will assist your judgment if you allow me to accompany you?"

The accent made the maiden hesitate for a moment, and then she quickly

answered: "No, no, not this evening. There is just daylight enough to choose a silk, and Wahrend has promised to join me in a committee of taste for its selection: so the committee and the council can be held at the same time, and to-morrow you shall be made acquainted with the judgment of the court."

And with these words she put her arm within that of Wahrend, and tripped away from the Plain Palais, leaving De Mara to the companionship of his own cogitations.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mi getto a nuoto, e una man ne viene
Rompendo l'argua, e te l'altra sostiene.
TASSO.

At the close of the last chapter we left De Mara standing alone in the Plain Palais, gazing after his mistress, who tripped gaily across it under the escort of her new attendant:—as they moved along he watched each step they took, as if he were scanning their very walk, in the hope he might gain some intelligence from it; and when at length they were fairly beyond his sight, he himself slowly passed on, deeply reflecting on the scene that had been acted.

What could it mean? This was the question that he asked himself over and over again a thousand times, and his busy fancy suggested nearly as many answers;—nor did the true one escape him; but the difficulty he had, was to fix on any one in particular, while his mind presented him with so many means of solving the same question. At last after full deliberation, he reduced his multitude of answers to two, and he determined that future and most close observation of what took place between Madeline and her new-found *chaperon* should conduct him to the more correct one. Either Wahrend had gained, while the maiden was an inhabitant of Unwalden, great influence over her mind—so great as to be able to assert his power on again renewing the acquaintance at Geneva; or else Madeline, as a punishment for the scene that took place in the ball-room, had adopted this course of revenging herself. The second solution was far more satisfactory to his self-complacency than the first; for, if correct, it was rather indicative than not, though not in a way he cared to have had it displayed—of the strength of her affection for him. But the chief objection to the entire adoption of this argument was the ease and good humour with which she had received him after what had passed. If this exhibition of Wahrend in the light of a lover was but a fiction, was it natural that she should immediately throw aside all the anger that beyond doubt she had felt most bitterly in consequence of that scene; and would she not rather have joined to her smiles for the Swiss, frowns for him?

This consideration had sufficient weight with De Mara to make him regard his situation in no very agreeable light; and he perceived that if this was indeed the correct solution of the orphan's present behaviour, his only chance was to frighten Wahrend from his post by assuming a peremptory attitude, and thus furnish himself with the undisputed opportunity to re-establish himself in Madeline's fair favour. But his self-love still vigorously clung to the thought that the whole might be the result of a finesse on her part, and that her heart was still his own. At all events he had already blundered sufficiently in his estimate of the character of his mistress, and it was therefore imperatively necessary that whatever future

step he might resolve to take, the utmost care should be adopted in working it to a crisis.

It was before he had been able to give any satisfactory arrangement to his intentions that he was stopped by Maravelli.

"Can it really be you, count?—far gone indeed must you be in the romance of love to be pacing the walks of Plain Palais with nought but the moon for a witness."

"Plain Palais!" exclaimed the count, and as he looked round him, he perceived that he was indeed still there, though, till that moment, so deeply had he been wrapt in his own thoughts, that he had been unconscious that for more than three hours he had been turning and returning on the very same spot of ground where he had received so provoking a leave-taking from his mistress.

"Plain Palais!" re-echoed Maravelli: "why, surely by this time you must know the public walk of Geneva when you see it;—or were you really so deep in the fairy land of Cupid and the Graces, that you imagined you were encircling your lady's bower, and that the fair light of Heaven was none other but the melting influence of her own bright eyes."

"You Italians are wonderful creatures," returned De Mara, "for you are able to discourse all the eloquence of love on the mere abstract proposition. But come," added he, willing to change the discourse, "what is the plan for the night's frolic, for I have a mind to show you that I am only on the outskirts of that fine place you were talking about so poetically, and have still bachelor's strength enough to leap the boundary, and return to my own companionable demesnes."

"Why, I hardly know whether I may tell you," replied Maravelli with a significant smile, "though your passive presence would be desirable enough."

"My passive presence! 'Faith, your Italianship is more deep in the fairy land of mystery than I in that of Cupid, for I am beyond my depth already, unless you mean that my body is wanted without my more immaterial part."

"Not so much out of your depth, after all," returned the other, drily; "but now I think of it, I shall leave you to your own discoveries—assisted by Mademoiselle Schvolen, for of course you spend the evening there?"

"Of course I do not," said the count impatiently.

"*Corpo di Bacco!* I trust there is no quarrel. Not spend the evening there! It will spoil the smartest piece of pleasantry that we have undertaken since you have deserted us."

"Most mysterious Maravelli!" cried De Mara, "excuse the alliteration, and do, for Heaven's sake, explain this wonderful secret that requires the use of my body without my soul."

"On one condition—that you spend the evening with your mistress."

"Humph!" exclaimed the nobleman, "I can hardly oblige you in that."

"Now this is a hard case. Here have we been beseeching your lordship for an evening these three months, and it was always, 'excuse me, I must wait upon the lady;' and now when we have found out a way to make this answer-perpetual available, you are as unaccommodating the other way."

"Have I not told you already that I intend to dedicate this evening to you and my old party, and you refuse to have me;—who is it now that is unaccommodating?"

"Well, I will compromise. You shall know my secret on condition that wherever we go to-night, you give us full privelege to take you along with us."

"A bargain," cried De Mara, "and now for the arcanum?"

"Thus it is;—but see there be no frowning. I need not tell you how scandalously you have deserted your former Knot of associates for this

Madonna of the road-side inn. Patient creatures that we were, we bore it till endurance became a failing, rather than a virtue; and last night we determined to celebrate your obsequies."

"My what?" exclaimed De Mara.

"Surely, there is nothing remarkable," answered the other, "that a man's friends, when they find that he is irretrievably dead, should wish to pay a last tribute, and honour him with a *memento mori*."

"The dead man returns you his most humble acknowledgments," cried the count, and he took off his hat while making a low reverence to Maravelli.

"Pray put on your hat again," said he with a mock gravity, "lest the dead man take cold. And now listen while I tell you how tenderly we mean to deal with your memory."

"But would it not have been as well to have taken evidence as to my decease, before you dealt in your tender mercies?"

"Evidence! The cause was as clearly proved as the death of St. Januarius. *I* was the first witness, and not only showed how many hundred times you had been summoned to our councils without coming, but was able to depose that you were so very dead that you had actually neglected to pay that trifling wager you lost on the day this cursed infatuation overtook you: let me tell you, this last point had very great weight indeed."

"Of course, after so satisfactory a deposition, no further testimony was required," observed the count.

"None was felt to be necessary; but to place every thing beyond the doubting of a sceptic, Mon Petit stepped forward, and stated that six weeks ago he addressed a letter to you, requiring your advice in a little love-affair of his own, which letter remained unanswered up to the very moment at which he was speaking. This also was thought most important evidence; for it was universally agreed that when De Mara forgot to proffer advice in a matter that concerned love and women, he must be lost to all animation."

"There is something in that, to be sure," muttered the count; "and so you were satisfied?"

"The third and last witness was no other than Altoz, who returned but yesterday from his journey, and like a true and faithful liege presented himself to the Knot immediately. He stated a thousand facts to prove that you had expired at least three months ago, and assured us he was so convinced of it, that when he arrived near Rheims, he rode over to your chateau for the express purpose of ordering the house to be shut up, and a hatchment with your coat of arms to be suspended over the door: the only hope to be gathered from his statement was that insinuated in the '*Resurgam*' which he ordered to be painted underneath in letters of two inches and a half."

"And so the Knot have set themselves up as undertakers and upholders after all?" cried De Mara; "I wish them joy of their new calling. But may I be allowed to ask to what particular use my body is to be applied, since you seem so anxious to have the loan of it for this evening?"

"That," replied Maravelli, "brings me back to the obsequies. After it was universally agreed that you were decidedly dead, poor Altoz, almost in tears for the loss of his departed friend, proposed that we should honour your memory with a public testimonial."

"The devil!" cried the count; "this is a little too much; what passes in your own carousal-room is all fair play; but a public testimonial—"

"The difficulty was felt; and your friends, tender of you, even though dead, agreed that the matter should be arranged allegorically, so that while their consciences were satisfied, no further exposure of your unhappy end should be bruited abroad."

"How infinitely kind! but the Lord have mercy on any thing in the shape of an allegory coming from such a band of unimaginative *messieurs!*"

"Ingratitude! rank ingratitude! But hear our delicate invention, and blush at its recital. After the discussion of numerous suggestions, that of Mon Petit was at length accepted. It ran thus:—That the whole Knot should accoutre themselves in becoming sables, and proceed this evening to the spot where it was held to be certain your body was interred; though it seems we miscalculated this point, for we held it to be sure that it was deposited at the lodgings of Mademoiselle Schvolen; and, after declaring the patent of your titles and honours, sing a solemn dirge as a requiem to your wandering and unhappy spirit."

"But you forget that Geneva is not Venice," cried De Mara; "and that instead of tracking the moonlit wave in your reflected gondola, the cold stones of the street must have been your theatre of representation, with the amiable prospect of the night-watch coming upon you every moment, in whose ears dulcet sounds are but ill-omened, and who call music a disturbance, entitling the performers to a lodging gratis in the guard-house for the night."

"That was thought of, too; but we deemed it worth while running the risk of having a scampering match with those worthies, to pay so much respect to our deceased associate: besides, even if detained, we calculated on softening their obdurate hearts when we told them of your many virtues and good qualities. And besides, again, who would not submit to the martyrdom of a night in the guard-house to do honour to the departed merits of De Mara in an allegory that he alone could have excelled?"

"Prodigiously allegorical on my faith!" exclaimed De Mara: "so the plan was to break in on my endeavours to carry the girl, and perhaps overturn all my prospects, by throwing an air of ridicule on my attentions. Upon my word, I am inexpressibly obliged to Mon Petit for his ingenuity, and to the Knot for their connivance in the absurdity. Under favour, I shall make bold to give these merry mourners a hint of my feeling on the subject."

Maravelli, who saw that the count was ruffled at the project, and had no inclination to draw on himself his indignation, which he felt it would be much easier to bear when shared among his fellows, made no immediate reply to this remark; and the two walked forward towards the usual place of rendezvous of the associates without further converse. De Mara, by what has been detailed, had his thoughts naturally carried back to Madeline, and, once engaged on that interesting subject, the other became but of secondary consideration. Ever active in making every thing and every body that came across his path subservient to the scheme that he had so much at heart, he could not help taxing his imagination to find out some way in which these burlesque preparations that were to have been converted into missiles for his own head, might be rendered serviceable to the position in which his affair with the orphan now stood; and by the time he reached the place of meeting with his quondam associates, he thought he saw a way in which the frolic of the night might be of use.

In consequence of the delay which had been occasioned to Maravelli by his conversation with the count, they found, on entering the *salon*, that the rest of the party were assembled.

No sooner did De Mara make his appearance, than Mon Petit, with a well-executed start and aspect of fright, exclaimed, "A ghost! a ghost!" and ran away to hide himself behind the window-curtain that hung nearest to him.

"I cannot help feeling," said De Mara gravely, "what a pity it is to check any facetiousness on the part of Mon Petit; for it is so seldom that he can amass any for the benefit of his friends, that under other circum-

stances I should be disposed to respond to his 'a ghost! a ghost!' by 'a miracle! a miracle!'—but, gentlemen, I request your serious attention for one minute: I trust I may command so much of your former friendship?"

The gravity of his manner effectually checked a score of good-fellow jokes that were on the point of being let off at his entry, and the silence of the party showed him how easy it was for him to assume at will that popular influence he had possessed over them before he gave them the slip so unceremoniously at the road-side inn.

"My good friends," continued he, as soon as he saw that he had secured to himself a silent hearing; "my good friends—for I trust you all know enough of De Mara to believe, that though he may be deluded awhile by the *ignis fatuus* of a beauteous woman, he still leaves his heart among you, as a pledge that he himself—business accomplished—will return with redoubled pleasure to your companionship;—I am among you to-night—first to explain, and next to petition. Maravelli has been relating to me the plan for this evening. I must take upon myself to tell you—even though my petition shall fail through it—that it is of that I complain, and most grievously. I will not deny that I have neglected you, apparently at least, though I think you ought to have known me well enough to feel that there is no one honour in this world that I so deeply prize, as that of belonging to the Knot, in the formation of which, I may take credit to myself for having been an active partisan; but the excellence of a judgment is to apportion the castigation to the offence. Now, consider for one moment, what you were about to do with the expectation of finding me at Mademoiselle Schvolen's; you intended to proceed thither for the purpose of exciting her attention and mine to your ceremonies. What would have been the consequence? For any thing that you have the power to guard against, it might have produced an irretrievable rupture between the girl and me: she might have resented such a public display personally on me, as emanating from my friends, and the whole of my past toils would have been undone by a crude and ill-digested frolic. This, too, ought to have been the more manifest to you, for a moment's consideration might have told you that my continued absence could only arise from the failure of my attack upon her; and, consequently, that any measure of my friends, calculated to give her dissatisfaction, was likely to be turned to my disadvantage. I trust I have said enough to convince you that my position is correct, and that in complaining of it I have been guilty of no breach of the Knot-privilege."

A general murmur of assent broke from the assembly, and Mon Petit was forward to make his acknowledgements of contrition at having been the main promoter of the project.

"Then," replied De Mara, "assist the petition which I am about to proffer, and more than amends will be made; but in making the request you will hear anon, I trust you will allow it to be understood, that no questions as to my motives are to be asked. I have already dropped sufficient to show you that I am not so successful in my present undertaking as I could wish; and if I am to flatter myself that the true meaning and intent of your proposed frolic was an indication of your desire to have me once more among you, I have a still better claim to call for your aid, as in promoting my success you will be hastening my re-appearance in this your hall of mirth. But to the petition, which is simply this—that having consented to put aside the obsequies with which you were about to honour my memory, and receive my living self again among you, you will render a second obligation to the returned prodigal, by giving him your voices to-night in a serenade instead of a dirge; and, as a reward, he will cede to you the privilege of performing it on the very spot where you proposed to immortalize him with a requiem."

This proposition was hailed with universal pleasure; for the only drawback to giving up the original scheme was a feeling of disappointment at not being able to enjoy the night's frolic.

"But," cried Maravelli, "you forget, De Mara, that we are in Geneva, and not in Venice."

"And you forget," replied the count, "that the scheme is worth a scampering match with the night-watch."

"To be sure it is," cried Mon Petit; "that will be the best part of the whole—what Herr Sassenhogt would call a running accompaniment to the serenade. So come, De Mara, produce your words, and we will have copies distributed, and adopt the plan at once."

"Ten minutes' law, if you please, gentlemen; the words are not yet written; but prepare your cloaks and guitars, and I will be with you anon to claim the poet's laurel at your hands."

In little more than the time for which he had stipulated, De Mara made his appearance with a paper in his hand. "Before I read my hasty effort," said he, "I must again remind you of the bargain on which I have accepted your services—that no questions are to be asked as to what the lines may allude to."

The assent of the party being given to this arrangement, the count read to them the following lines, which he proposed by way of

SERENADE.

My lady love, the moon is high,
Sweeping the greenly-tinted sky;
Her tranquil light sheds silver ray
On wood and wave that underlay.
Fairy elves keep watch and ward,
To mould the beams that touch the sward,
And with the bubbles dightly star
Titania's giddy and pellucid car.

But yonder, wind-borne, floats a cloud,
The smile on Dian's face to shroud;
Darkness all the earth embays,
No longer deck'd with Dian's rays:
The tiny fairies droop their head,
And hurry to their dew-sprent bed;—
Or, crouching in some moss-grown court,
Beshrew the spiteful cloud that checks their sport.

Thou art *my* moon, my lady love,
And in thy gleam alone I move;
But, lo! the light thou shed'st is paled,
And all my instinct heart is quail'd.
Oh, let it be but passing gloom
That overhangs my tristful doom;
Dissolve the angry clouds that frown,
And re-assert thy ray-emitting crown.

These lines were received with all the favour which any thing coming from De Mara was sure to obtain from his companions; and under the superintendence of Maravelli, whose readiness on the occasion would have done honour to Sassenhogt himself, it was arranged to an air of Martini, with which the vocal strength of the party was sufficiently acquainted, to be able to make a decent figure in it after one or two experiments.

Thus tutored, they sallied forth from their hall of rendezvous; and that

they might not excite attention sooner than was necessary, they took different ways in parties of two and three to the street where Madeline's abode was situated. The count's heart beat high when, as he arrived opposite her dwelling, he perceived a light in her sitting-room; and still higher did it beat, when the illumination within enabled him to trace the shadows of two persons moving to and fro. Could it be that Wahrend—the happy unknown villager—was still there at that late period? It was long past the hour when even he, favoured lover as he had been, had been expected to withdraw for the night, since the decease of Deboos had made Madeline watchful o her own proprieties; and yet if it were not Wahrend, who could it be?—Albert? He hoped so, and yet hardly dared flatter himself that the conjecture was correct, so well did he know that the darling custom of the youth was to bury himself deep in the solitude of his own chamber, without book or candle, and there brood over his own impenetrable reveries. If possible, however, he was determined to discover to whom that shadow belonged; and he rejoiced that his accidental rencontre with the Italian had suggested to him a means by which he might be able to attract the inmates of the apartment to the window; to do which the more effectually, he resolved to take no part in the serenade, lest Madeline's quick sense should catch his voice.

By this time all were arrived; and the signal being given by Maravelli, the vocalists began their task. Up to that moment not a sound had been heard in the street; all was hush, and, to mortal appearance, as inanimate as the face of the broad moon that looked down upon them with all the fulness of her midnight lustre, as though willing to receive the tribute that De Mara's essay offered to her beauty. The voices of those who sung were of a sweet and flexible tone; and the habit which prevailed with the associates of spending a large portion of their meetings in such harmonious amusements, gave a happy unison and finish to their joint endeavours.

The count, who had stationed himself in a deep and shady angle of the street, had waited for the first notes of the serenade with the impatience of a man who was expecting from their effect the solution of a harassing and knotty riddle. They commenced, and his eye became unalterably fixed on the pair of shadows that were still reclining against the muslin curtains that excluded the passing stranger from penetrating into the interior of the apartment. When first the stilly night was wakened from her gentle slumber by the concord of sweet sounds that stole upon her silence, the shadows, that heretofore had flitted to and fro, as though the substantial forms from which they emanated were pacing the floor of the chamber, became stationary and fixed as the gaze of their anxious watcher. De Mara hailed it as a good omen of the song having attracted *their* attention, and *his* became more zealous in return. Presently the light curtain of the nearest window was seen quickly to move—the window opened—and some one protruded into the balcony. "It is a man's form," muttered the nobleman to himself, as he endeavoured to satisfy his mind of *what* man's form it was. But the substance was nearly as obscure and undefined as the shadow had been; and it was in vain that he stretched his powers of sight to the uttermost, to gain knowledge of the person. Whoever it might be, he leaned over the balcony for an instant, as if in the act of intense listening, and then suddenly rose to his height again. De Mara, who reckoned each action with that nicety of observation, which the tiger pourtrays as she screws each muscle to its highest function to dart upon her victim, fancied this last movement was indicative of the figure being about to retire—perhaps, to return no more. Such suspense was intolerable; and, forgetful of his resolution to keep beyond the illumination of the moon's ray, he darted forward to ascertain, by nearer approach, who it was that commanded the right of being in the possesion of Madeline's apartment at such an hour of night:

he looked--he recognised—and his breast heaved high, as though casting off some huge and onerous load, while his lips involuntarily gave utterance to the words "Albert! thank Heaven!"

It comes within man's nature when he has intently set his mind on one sole object, to feel at its satisfactory completion more than the gain will warrant. Thus with De Mara! So much had he feared that the night companion of his mistress was one whose presence would make him tremble, that when the re-action came by which his imagination was relieved from that dread, he admitted more joy than the ascertained position had a right to justify. So the red-hot gamester, who has lost sum after sum the long night through, feeds his spirit with unreasonable hope when at length a solitary stake is won, little dreaming of the despair that is to be his when—the sitting finished—he casts up the fearful balance of his losings.

De Mara had rightly interpreted the meaning of Albert's motion; it was to retire—but only for the purpose of summoning his sister. She, little dreaming for whom the night music was intended, obeyed the call; and again Albert with deep intensity of feeling is leaning over the balcony, as though he would drink music's charmed cup to the very dregs. His eager eye beams with fire borrowed from the brain, and he clenches the rail that supports him, as one who is suddenly transported beyond the strength of his nature.

The count no sooner traced the fairy form of his mistress in the balcony, than he became anxious that she should be made aware whence the music emanated, and in whose honour the serenade was given. The performers had just concluded the second stanza; and as they commenced the third, De Mara's voice, so well known, and so melodious in the maiden's ears, joined in its place. Madeline recognised it in a moment, and the recognition explained to her in the like short space of time the whole purport and intent of the performance: for an instant after the mystery was solved to her, she lingered in the balcony, as though it required an effort on her part to drag herself away from that which had ever been her chief food of love, and then, with a whisper to Albert to follow her example, she drew back within the recess of the window.

But that whisper the brother heard not, or heeded not. His whole sense of hearing was consecrate to the sounds that fed his passion; and the rest of his faculties lay entranced and helpless, as though they were of no avail.

De Mara understood the action of his mistress, and his heart, that had just been beating so high at ascertaining Wahrend's absence, now sank again to find that she shrank from receiving any token of devotion from him. He ceased to sing, and the harmony of his companions was but as discord to his hearing.

Maravelli was just trilling out the last notes of the serenade, and contemplating a wind-up with a peculiar flourish of his own, when Mon Petit, who had been all along not a little nervous as to their final destination for the night—and, in his fear of the night-guard coming upon them, thought 'each bush an officer'—exclaimed, "The guard!—the guard!—I hear their tread and heavy heels at the corner of the street."

This flurried and ominous announcement produced an immediate sensation among the Knot. Each took to flight in the direction where escape seemed most feasible: it was in vain that Maravelli, called out to them at least to finish the serenade before they fled; no one heeded the despairing tone in which he urged the request; and he himself, at length imbibing the night-guard panic that had seized upon his friends, joined the train of fugitives; though, true to his faith to the last, he sang as he ran, till his want of breath brought his notes down to something little better than a snorting sort of fugue.

The count, who had been disturbed in his impatient reverie on Made-

line's waywardness, by the sudden exclamation of Mon Petit, and the consequent bustle of his companions, unconsciously imitated their example, and because they ran, ran himself. Nor did he stop till he found himself beyond the boundaries of the city and its suburbs, and close upon the borders of the mighty lake that looked like some Leviathan inward sea, stretching its broad and ample face to court the gaze of the night-luminary that tipt with sparkling silver each rippling of its waters. The tranquillity and undisturbed repose of the scene recalled him to attend to outward objects. He ceased the mechanical speed by which he had so rapidly outstripped his companions, and, looking round, he found he was alone.

His mind was so deeply involved in the circumstances connected with his progress with Madeline, that he could afford but a faint smile at the recolleetion of the cause which had thus broken up his party of *camaradas*, and brought himself so unexpectedly to the dwelling of solitude and silence. The smile given, his mind again reverted to that which had principally occupied his thoughts for so many months, and was now more peremptory there than ever; and he thanked the opportunity which allowed him, without fear of interruption, to wander along the moonlit banks of the lake, and ruminate in commune with his own soul on those measures, which his fertile brain suggested as best calculated to counteract the marring step he had adopted, in provoking Madeline's heart from that train of love which he had taken so much pains to lay.

Slowly he paced the shore, and minutely he laboured in his mind each point that was to be urged on behalf of his again being on a right understanding with the object of his pursuit. Every possible move in his game of love was passed in review on the board, but it seemed to his discontented spirit as if every check was black, and every suggestion only a further step towards the losing of the game. Now it was that he—a desperate gamester at Cupid's hazard—found opportunity to cast up the amount of his stakes; and now it was that, in ascertaining the sum of his losses, the short-lived joy he had obtained in being assured of Wahrend's absence became evanescent, and as nought in the sweeping balance against him.

True it was that Wahrend in his belief was not in Madeline's apartment at midnight: but what proof was that that he was not in her heart? He had watched them keenly at the Plain Palais, and looks had passed between them that had left a deep and painful impression on his memory, so that he hardly dared to trust himself to think at all on the prospect:—to think calmly on it was beyond his power; all lay enveloped in such oppressive obscurity. "Fair queen of evening," exclaimed he, as he turned his gaze upwards to the orb that sailed the heavens in all the fullness of her majesty:—fair queen of evening! Oh that the light was mine, or that I might wield thee as Perseus did of old his Gorgon shield, and, by turning your illumined front on her who harasses and delights in the self-same instant, penetrate the veritable thoughts that lie deep imbedded in her bosom."

Well might he so address the mistress of the skies! Brightly she shone as just a month before she had made clear the wandering steps of Albert, when he rushed from the concert-room with all the ecstacy of music tumultuous in his soul: half that month had seen her dwindle from the face of earth till no more than a fine and horned thread marked her 'diminished head;' and now the same space of time had once again regenerated her, and forth she blazed in the mid-heaven in all her pristine glory.

But a rude and sudden sound all on the instant broke De Mara's train of thought. It fell upon his ear, as though some heavy and massive thing had been dashed upon the surface of the lake. Awakened from himself, he listens, and the first full sound is followed by a gurgling of the water, as if subsiding after the violent rupture it had undergone. Then another

sound comes upon his ear; 'tis like the convulsive struggling of a living thing beating the surface in despair, till, sinking below, the noise is deadened and removed. Once, twice, thrice, the same perception reached the nobleman; while his eye, directed by his ear, is enabled to perceive something half above the surface of the waves, half-immersed in their broad and engulfing bosom.

De Mara, though a cold-hearted creature of the world, was no misanthrope. The thought was upon him that it was a human being in the last agony of drowning; and full of the hasty impulses of humanity, he plunged into the lake, and swam towards the spot whither his attention had been directed. As he approached he found that his conjecture was right, for he could trace in part the shape of a human figure just sinking beneath the surface of the stream. The confirmation of his expectation threw vigour into all his muscles, and he struck out bold and strong. Swiftly his nervous limbs ploughed a track through the obedient waters: at each stroke his elevated head rose high above the surface, as though the force of his skilful action was used to enable him to take a surer survey of the object that lay stretched inanimately before him; and, even at the very moment when the waves seemed to be opening a capacious gap to receive their unresisting prey, the firm right hand of the dextrous swimmer snatched it from its destiny, while his whole frame was exerted in bearing it slowly, but surely, to the distant bank, that almost seemed to be in traitorous concert with its sister water, and to recede in spite of De Mara's best efforts to land his burden. At length the shore was gained; and the count, nearly exhausted with the struggle he had had to encounter, could do little more than roll his prize beyond the reach of the waters. A few minutes, however, re-invigorated his strength, and he was able again to turn his attention to the body that lay before him. It was that of an athletic man, of a short and stunted figure, clad in the usual humble costume of the country. Round his neck was clasped the collar of a cloak so tightly, that it required some effort from his preserver to unfasten it: this, however, explained in some measure why the body had floated so long on the surface, for the count perceived in a moment that it would have taken some minutes for the element to saturate and destroy the buoyant qualities of the huge expanse of cloth, so as to permit the substance which it upheld to assert its gravity beneath the waters. But still the being, whoever he might be, remained motionless and inanimate, and De Mara felt that there yet remained much to be done to complete his task in a happy issue. As for other aid than his own, it was hopeless; the night had relapsed into its former silence, and look which way he would, he could see neither villa nor cot that might afford hope of hospitable succour. Of surgical knowledge the count could not make much boast, but he remembered something of the old-fashioned maxim of rolling the body, or suspending it by the heels till it voided the superfluous fluid that had been swallowed—and for want of better hope he commenced this task; but the undertaking to suspend the body with the head downwards required some sort of prop by which to steady the balance; and, on looking round him, an old wood-work jetty presented itself as the object best fitted for such a use: the position justified his expectation, for almost immediately the stomach was relieved from a vast quantity of the fluid that had been swallowed, and the lungs heaved with something between a sigh and a groan. The body was now suffered to be extended on the ground, and it soon began to give still more pregnant symptoms of approaching re-animation. De Mara anxiously noted each token as it appeared: the chest vibrating with newly recovered breath, the involuntary twitching of the limbs, the play of the lips, as though endeavouring to modulate human sounds, the shifting eyes that seemed to be practising to regain that rapid and unforced motion which constitutes one of

the wonders of that most wondrous organ—all confirmed the hope within him that the life of a human being had been saved.

But at length the hope became certainty. The stranger half raised his head from the ground, gazed wildly at his preserver, and exclaimed in broken accents, "You have kept your promise, then. I thought you had forgotten that this was our night of meeting."

"My good fellow," cried the count, "I am afraid you have not yet gathered back your fleeting senses. Rest quiet awhile."

"Why, no; it is not the voice. Yet who else but one who was bound under the sanction of a promise should be in such a place at such an hour?"

"Take my advice," replied the count, "and do not harass your thoughts at the present moment. The peril you have so narrowly escaped has unnerved you."

"Peril!—peril!—ah, now I remember the whole. But what is this? Dry land, when I should be deep in the waters! what does it all mean?"

"It means that you must ask no questions till you are more tranquil. Do you think that you are strong enough to walk?"

"Ay, that I am!—and strong enough to climb to yon old jetty's height again, and take a second leap;" and he arose from the ground, not without some little effort, though it was apparent that he was rapidly recovering all his former powers.

De Mara laid his hand gently on his shoulder as he said, "I know not how strong your body may be, but your words evidently show that your mind has not yet recovered its tone, or you would never dwell on such madness a second time."

"Sir, do you know me?" cried the stranger abruptly.

"I cannot say I do," replied the count, somewhat puzzled at his manner.

"Then how comes it you pretend to know my affairs better than I do myself? did you ever hear of the proverb 'every man his own physician?'"

"Perhaps I have; and so have many dead men, if they could tell all."

"And living ones too," returned the other, "who, but for adopting the hint, would be in your friends'—the dead men's place. I am one of those who acknowledge its truth; and what if I came to the conclusion that drowning was good for me?"

"Why, in that case," replied De Mara with a smile, "you were likely to prove another maxim, that—'good is sometimes ill.'"

"Ah, sir, I find you are as ready as Sancho Panza at a proverb; so I leave you to your learning, and beg that this time I may be allowed to take my bath by myself."

"For Heaven's sake," cried the count, astonished at the man's audacious infatuation, "do not be so mad!"

"Mad again! Hark-ye, my cork jacket, which is better of the two? To die filled with water in a couple of minutes, or to die filled with nothing on the starving system of a couple of weeks? I have neither ducat, franc, nor stiver wherewith to purchase a spoonful of poor man's broth, and I have no ambition to walk the earth till I am reduced to a ready-made specimen for a school of anatomy."

"But have you no friends?"

"Friends!" cried the Reckless with a fearful shout;—"who ever heard of friends for the *sans six sous?* No, sir, the only acquaintances I can hope to make are the hangman or the whipper-in of poor devils at the cart's tail; and I have long been of opinion that it is best not to be on speaking terms with such ill-favoured gentry."

"But perhaps you might find a friend in me," cried the count, anxious to urge any thing that might break down the fellow's desperate resolution.

"Turn your face to the moon," cried he, "that I may read it. Humph! so far, so good;—no, that's an ugly line—but there's a good one set against

it;—so perhaps I may find a friend in you; and now I think of it, it is the only satisfaction you can render me for the infernal piece of impertinence you have been guilty of in baling my body out of the lake, as if it were no better than a sack of cheese-paring."

"Certainly, my new-found half-drowned friend," cried the count, a little nettled at the unceremoniousness of his remarks, "you have a most winning way of insinuating your rights. But come, a thought strikes me that we may be mutually useful to one another: therefore, on condition that you furnish me with your company to-night, I engage to find you a supper, and five gold louis for your present use."

"A bargain," cried the other, voraciously; "but mind, I warn you that your offer is equal at least to ten louis, for my appetite, never contemptible, has the peculiar recommendation this evening of being whetted with a three days' fast."

"Well, I admit the honesty of your warning, but feel the more bound to stand to the bargain; and I hope you may find more satisfaction in swallowing mine host's viands, than the cold cheer on which I found you feeding when I first had the honour of making your acquaintance."

"Never fear, most noble gentleman," replied the stranger, "for though neither meal will be at my own expense, I know how to pay more respect to one so handsomely volunteered on your part than that on which I forced myself so unceremoniously, and at a moment's warning."

"But how about our clothes?—I begin to find mine somewhat chilly."

"We will walk the quicker, and I doubt not a change may be found for you at our house of eating, wherever you may please to appoint it: and, for myself, the devil may care before I shall give a thought to what is on the outside, as long as I can line my interior with fat capon and smoking provender."

"Come then," cried the count, "the sooner we start, the sooner we shall be there;"—and the two proceeded side by side at a rapid pace towards Geneva.

CHAPTER XXII.

Ay, mark the plot. Not any circumstance
That stood within the reach of the design,
Of persons, dispositions, matter, time,
Or place, but by this brain of mine was made
An instrumental help; yet nothing from
The induction to the accomplishment
Or done of purpose, seemed forced but by accident.—Old Play.

The pace at which the count and his new-formed acquaintance strode along was not very well suited to conversation, and they therefore proceeded a considerable part of the road in silence. De Mara employed the opportunity in endeavouring to conjecture from the dialogue that had taken place, what sort of a being it was whom he had so suddenly enlisted into his company; and now that the first enthusiasm of saving a fellow-creature's life had somewhat gone off, he did not find much to gratify him in such tokens and symbols as the stranger had thought fit to exhibet This was not the first time the nobleman had heard of, or even met with men who affected a hatred towards mankind, and amongst that number, towards themselves, and whose mouths flamed with fine-worded resolutions of calling on death to release them from their sorrows, and seeking the

refuge of the grave from the troublous annoyance of the world. But the present specimen seemed to be one of misanthrophy without sentiment—of worldly contempt without redeeming grace; and the more he dwelt on the words that had been uttered by the strange good-for-nought whose life he had preserved, the less reason he found to congratulate himself on the success of his effort. With this feeling came the thought whether he should not at once get quit of his companion, and leave him to rid himself of his troubles as he might list; but this, as often as it recurred, was checked by the idea of which he had already dropped a hint to the man—that they might perhaps be mutually useful to each other. The ill success of his project on Madeline had made him deeply feel the loss of Deboos; and the reckless manner in which this half-drowned stoic had reprobated his interference, even to save him from the very fangs of death, had originated the thought in his mind that one so daring, so audacious, and so unbending, might be of service to him either in suggesting some plan that should be of use, or at least in executing any thing that might require intrepidity or carelessness of the world's law from its agent.

While these thoughts were fluctuating in his brain, the mysterious and uncouth creature who formed this chief matter of them strode on a little in advance and silently, nor ever turned his head to see whether his companion tracked the same course which he had taken. The same even rapid pace still marked his progress—the same downcast lowering of the head into the collar of his cloak rendered his shape scarcely more than a moving lumbering mass; and no change in his manner could be observed, but that as he approached nearer and nearer to the environs of the city, he drew his large and ample cloak in still closer folds around his form, and his head sank still lower and lower beneath its upper part, so that the child of superstition whose fancy loves best to look at all dark things askant, might almost have pictured the object that pressed forward so rapidly as some headless and preternatural bugbear of nature.

At length he halted, that De Mara might reach his side.

"Friend of drowned men and of suppers," he said, "yonder is Geneva: I can smell the busy haunts of men, and it comes upon the sense like the narrow and unwholsome odour of a jail. If so poor a man as myself may presume to petition so rich a man as you, I would prefer a request that the promised eatables for which my appetite is more than prepared, may be obtained at the first house to which we come."

"Just as you will," replied the count, secretly glad at a proposal which prevented his having to parade the streets of Geneva in company with so ill-favonred a follower, "but I suspect we shall find some difficuly in finding any place to receive us at so late an hour."

"If I may be constituted guide, I will undertake to lead the way to a house fully competent to serve up a supper for a prince, provided it be paid for in a princely way."

"Agreed!" cried De Mara; "I promise you that this night there shall be limits neither to the quality nor the quantity of the supply which your appetite demands."

"Then be pleased to follow me down this turning," said the other, who during the last words of the count had made another full stop at a corner where a dark and dismal lane emptied itself into the main road along which they had hitherto been walking.

"With all my heart," rejoined the count; "though it must be confessed that the lane is, like yourself, very independent of outside appearances."

The stranger made no answer to this remark of his patron, but strode on as lustily as before; while the count, who found the intricacies of the way even greater than he had anticipated, was obliged to give all his attention to the course which his leader adopted; for their line of march was chiefly

delineated by a long and high wall, and the moon, which had by this time descended from her midnight height, cast from it a heavy shadow across their path. As soon as the wall finished, the count found himself in the neighbourhood of a cluster of houses of no very promising appearance, and it was at the door of one of these that his guide made a stand.

"This is the land of milk and honey," exclaimed he; "shall I demand admission?"

"The sooner the better," said De Mara, "for I shall not be sorry to throw aside my damp attire before the heat into which my imitation of your ramping pace has thrown me, subsides."

The stranger on this bidding knocked at the gate, which appeared to lead into a sort of porch; and, after a short pause, a thick-set jolly-looking fellow made his appearance at a little loop-hole that formed a sort of set-off to the entry.

"Who knocks?" interrogated he.

"Put the light this way," answered the other, "and answer the question for yourself."

The host (if such he was) did as he was directed, and after gazing on the head that for the occasion was not only lifted out of its hiding-place, but unbonneted to afford a fairer perusal of the features, "What! is it you, master?" exclaimed he.

"Whisht!" cried the other, putting his finger to his lips.

"Not I!" testily replied the landlord; "a pretty thing to whisht for a man without a tester in his pouch! I told you two nights ago you could have no entry here; and I marvel at your impudence to knock up a man from his bed only to show him a face which has poverty marked in every line of it."

"Mercenary scoundrel!" muttered the other; and then raising his voice, he continued, "but, my good Kobolt, hear a word in reason. If I have no money myself, here is a noble gentleman who will pay like a prince:—I tell you his garments are of ducats, and his cloak made of louis."

"Humph!" replied the host; "I would there were less poetry in the description, for I know you of old—the less the subject will bear it, the more you lay on load. However, let the gentleman show himself, and I warrant my eye will reduce your poetic fiction to the prosaic fact of the matter."

De Mara had no relish for such an exhibition. "Hark-ye, sirrah," cried he, "open the door of the inn, if it be an inn, or you may chance to hear of it from the syndic to-morrow. Do you suppose I am to stand here to have my appearance scanned like a horse at a fair? Open, I say!"

"That will I," cried Kobolt, and he threw the door wide open as he added in a whisper to him who had been refused, "I can draw inferences from words as well as from dress; and there is the true aristocratic accent in your companion's voice."

And then to the count, with a low bow, he said, "I beg your pardon, sir, for detaining you for a moment, but the lateness of the hour, and the—"

"Enough, enough," interrupted De Mara, who was afraid that the host's next observation might allude to the strange companion with whom he appeared; "and now satisfy this gentleman as to what supper he can have, and me as to what change of dress you can lend me, for I have had the ill fortune to be better acquainted with the Lake than the coldness of the night makes agreeable."

The landlord asked no questions, though it was easy to see from the expression of his countenance that there was some curiosity lurking in his mind to know what could have led to such a chance.

"If you will wait on the gentleman," said the stranger, "I can find my own way to the kitchen; and perhaps I may have the good luck to meet with enough in the larder to furnish my appetite with occupation till his honour is served."

"With all my heart," replied the host; and he led the count up an old-fashioned flight of stairs, that creaked heavily in answer to each footfall that pressed upon their well-worn boards. When they arrived on the first landing, De Mara found himself in an antique but lofty corridor, around the sides of which were arrayed doors that appeared to lead to the various apartments on that floor. The tympans and mouldings of the doors, like the balustrades of the staircase, were deeply carved in the old Swiss style; and the general appearance afforded every reason to believe that the house had seen better days and a more dignified proprietor than him who was leading the count through its obscure and almost indistinguishable departments.

After having crossed the extensive corridor, Kobolt paused before a door, and, placing his hand on the lock, endeavoured to turn it: for awhile it resisted his efforts, and at length only moved under his strength with a grating and unwilling sound. When the door was opened, a cold and damp vapour seemed to come from the apartment, and De Mara thought he felt a greater chill creep over him than when he first plunged into the broad waters of the lake, and thus commenced the strange adventures of the night. Perhaps there was something in the novelty and uncouthness of his situation that added to the really damp draft of air that made its way from the room when the door was opened, and met him on the threshold: but be it what it might, it came simultaneously with a thought of doubt as to the position in which he had placed himself. Could it be possible that he had suffered himself to be inveigled into a den of thieves? The idea mixed itself with the corporeal discomfort of the dark air that reached his frame, and he could not resist a half shudder at the complication.

"I hope your honour will excuse the apartment," said Kobolt, observing the shivering of the count; "but we are so little used to guests, that these rooms are scarcely looked into once in a year, and the air has time to get as unwholesome as it pleases. I would show your honour into my own room, but my wife is in bed. However, if you will wait a little, I shall not be a minute in fetching you a change of apparel, and then the kitchen-fire will set all right again in a twinkling."

With these words he withdrew, and De Mara was left to his own reflections. Again the thought passed across his mind as to what sort of abode he had thus heedlessly entered. There was no want of courage in his disposition; but none but madmen or knights-errant are in the habit of supposing that one man can face a crew; and it was therefore with no very comfortable sensations that he contemplated the sketch of night-horrors which his fancy, fevered by the excitement he had undergone within the last six or eight hours, pictured to his "seething brain." That his new-found companion was a man ruthless of the world's good name, there could be no question; and it is the fashion to conclude, that those who are careless of "golden opinions" in one way, will not be great sticklers for them in another. Geneva was not famous for desperadoes, but Deboos' mysterious death, and Mademoiselle Basault's adventure with the robber, forced themselves into his memory in despite of that general reflection. The house, too, in which he was cooped up, had no very fascinating appearance: at all events, it was in strict accordance with the most approved recipe of romance-writers and novelists, and it only wanted a deep and hanging wood to cluster round it to be the site of as pretty a horror as ever was recorded. But the count's mind, though doubting, was buoyant; and he could not help flattering himself that, however suspicious the appearance of his companion might be, the landlord's jolly temperament seemed to have nothing of the ascetic caste of a midnight bird of prey about it: his refusal, too, to admit the stranger, even when he announced that he brought a companion with him, appeared to be opposed to the sinister reflections which had entered his mind; and to

so determined a lover of the sex, the mere fact of there being a woman in the house, as announced by Kobolt as an apology for not showing his guest into his bed-room, was comforting and satisfactory.

While these thoughts were making their way in strange disorder through De Mara's mind, he employed himself in taking a survey of the apartment in which he had been left by his host. In general aspect it seemed to be of a piece with, and after the same design as the corridor and staircase; but the ornaments of the room were that which most attracted his attention. It seemed as if it had served in olden time as the armoury of the place, for on every side were suspended those tools and implements of slaughter which every considerable family in those days thought it necessary to have at hand, when the law was too weak to be able to repel the sudden attacks of malevolent neighbours. On every side were suspended helmets and breast-plates, spears and swords, daggers and coats of mail—but all so covered with dust, and acted on by the moist atmosphere in which they had so long abided, that the dulled and lack-lustre steel almost refused to give back the unaccustomed light that De Mara passed before them, as he took cognisance of the gloomy show.

The sight of these warlike weapons again made active the suspicions that were afloat in his brain, and he bethought him that it was a good opportunity to furnish himself with something like an instrument of defence, should matters indeed be so bad as his worst conjectures would lead him to believe. With this intention he singled out a sheathed dagger that hung from the wall in company with a shield and two-handed sword. The moment was tempting, and it would be easy to conceal so small a weapon in his dress. Full of the idea, he stretched forth his hand to grasp his prize;—he clutched—but in the nervous eagerness of the instant, some entanglement was unperceived, and, though the dagger was his, down came rattling sword and shield; and a cloud of dust accompanied the clashing jingle that rang with many an echo through the empty place.

"Your honour is an antiquarian, I suppose?" cried Kobolt, who at that moment made his appearance at the door. "Fugh!—why, here is as much dust as a troop of horse would raise in the most dusty road in Switzerland after a three weeks' drought."

"I had a mind," replied the count, somewhat hesitatingly, in being discovered in so equivocal a position—"I had a mind to have a closer survey of the curious workmanship on the sheath of this dagger. The whole room is enough to awaken the curiosity of one who has some right to boast of his ancestry. In case of war, the magistracy of Geneva would do well to apply to you to furnish a regiment out of your own store."

"Then I am sure," replied Kobolt, "I should be good citizen enough to let them have the whole at a very cheap rate. I bought them myself with the rest of the furniture of the house, and, as you may guess, they are a mere dead weight on my hands."

"Indeed!" cried the count; "I have a fancy I could find you a purchaser for them, for I know a nobleman who prides himself on his collection of such things; and, indeed, it was with that thought in my mind that I took down this dagger: perhaps you will have no objection to let me take it with me on the condition of returning it in a few days, if I do not find you a purchaser."

"None in the world, sir," replied the host; "and I shall be more than obliged to you if you can recommend me to any one who will buy the lumber. He may rely on a bargain!—And now, sir, here are the clothes; you will find them but plain affairs, but they are dry; and I will wait outside while you make the change."

De Mara felt much re-assured at the frank manner in which his host had yielded the dagger to him, and was soon busy in effecting the change that

was so necessary to his comfort. But still there was something in the dead-like silence and sombre hangings of the apartment, that forced a like feeling on his heart, and he determined to try his host yet further, in the hope of making assurance doubly sure.

When, therefore, his change of dress was effected, he observed: "I cannot help feeling a little uneasy for the friends at whose house I am residing, as they will be alarmed at my absence. Do you think you could contrive to have a note conveyed to them for me? I shall not think half-a-dozen louis too much for the messenger's trouble."

Kobolt's eyes twinkled at the mention of such a sum, and he replied, "I will go myself on your errand as soon as I have shown you into the kitchen, and in half an hour you shall see me again."

The count expressed his acknowledgments, and, having his tablets about him, he at once wrote a few lines to Altoz, taking care to word them in Spanish, as the best security he could invent against their being read by his messenger.

Kobolt now only stayed to usher the count into the kitchen, where they found the stranger deep in the enjoyment of flesh and fowl; bones of all sorts lay by the side of his plate—emblematic of the havoc he had already committed on the contents of his host's larder; though, had it not been for such signs, the reasonable conjecture on witnessing the voracious manner in which he continued to devour every thing that lay spread before him, would have been, that he had only that moment commenced the work of devastation.

"You are well come," cried he, as soon as he perceived their approach, "for as to this wine, Kobolt, it is the vilest that the Rhine was ever guilty of conveying on its stream. Come—come—let us have a batch with the black cork. Did you think I had not been here so long as to forget the mark of the best?"

"Indeed I did not," cried Kobolt; "but if you will undertake to help yourself, it is yourself you must blame if you light on bad liqour. There," he added, taking half-a-dozen bottles out of a small locker at the back of the settle—"there is the black cork for you, and I doubt not you have memory enough left to recognise the old flavour."

"Ay, ay, this is it, indeed," said the stranger; "I do believe it was the smell of this wine oozing out of your cellar that first brought me acquainted with your house."

"Well," returned Kobolt, "I am glad you have not lost your taste; and now you must excuse me, gentlemen, for I have a little business to look after. I shall be with you again anon." And then, with a side-glance at De Mara, as much as to say, "you know why!" he quitted the room.

De Mara's new friend seemed hardly to have heard the words, or to notice the absence of his host, for his attention appeared to be once again wholly fixed on the creature-comforts that were strewed before him in no small abundance on the kitchen-table; and it was quite a sight to the nobleman to watch how the man fed and drank, and then drank and fed again, as though his appetite was inexhaustible, and, like some water-mill's never-idle wheel, was perpetually rolling round in one uncontrollable and unsatisfied condition.

In this manner the count sat attentive to his *invité*, still expecting the moment when some sort of show would be made indicative of his power of demolishing being somewhat blunted. But when nearly half an hour had elapsed, and the same sort of display of devouring appeared to his impatience to threaten to become eternal, he could not help exclaiming, "Pray, how long did you say it was since you last enjoyed the comfort of a supper?"

The stranger, without looking up, replied, "By-and-by, most noble,—by-and-by you shall have answers to what you list. But I should have thought you were too well-mannered to interrupt a poor fellow at his devotions; and having delivered himself of this rebuke, he continued to make his way through flesh and fluid as though he had made some secret vow to himself never to pause so long as a drop or morsel remained on the board.

In obedience to the suggestion of the stranger, De Mara again relapsed into silence; nor did he utter another syllable till the hint was given by the other pushing his knife and fork from him, and taking a long and hearty expiration from the very bottom of his chest, as if he intended to signify by it a sort of confession that he had fed so largely, it was become necessary to thrust even the air from his lungs, so that nothing might intrude to interrupt the comfortable digestion of the enormous mass he had devoured.

"I am afraid," exclaimed the count, "that there is only one thing to which you can attend to-night, so that it will be in vain to introduce any other."

"Not at all, not at all, most excellent finder of suppers," cried the other; "*there was* only one thing to which I could attend; but thanks to your guarantee and my diligence, that matter has been happily discussed; and now I am entirely at your service for any thing it may be wise in you to suggest, or me to hear."

"Nay, but now," said the count, "you are getting on as much too fast, as awhile ago you were too slow. Before I shall care to suggest whatever may be afloat in my mind, it will be as well for me to learn what sort of a man is he to whom these suggestions are to be made."

"And it will be as well for me to learn the suggestions—since that is to be the word—of my patron, from which I may judge how much it is necessary for me to confess. I have spent some few years of my life in Catholic Italy, and learned the lesson there of apportioning my quantum of confession to the taste of my father confessor."

"Then at least I may gather thus much from you, that I am addressing a good catholic."

"By no means," replied the other, hastily; "it has ever been my maxim to do in Rome as the Romans do. In Italy, therefore, I was a Catholic: but now that I am in Geneva, my principles are decidedly Calvinistic: England had the honour of my birth, and therefore, till I quitted it to become a continental rambler, I was as proper a Lutheran as the bench of bishops could wish."

"Then we may set you down as a *conveniencer*, I suppose; and though, perhaps, I have the credit of first inventing the word, as much cannot be accorded to you, I am afraid—of having invented the sect. The practisers of it have been heard of before."

"With all my heart; and I rejoice to find myself in such goodly company: but mean while we are forgetting business, unless indeed your object is to discipline me for a new crusade."

"Oh, no," said the count with a laugh, "I have no such eremitical views; or if my labour must be called a crusade, it is for the sake of a daughter of the church, not of mother church herself."

"So I opined," replied the other; "never in my life did I meet with a gay cavalier crying in the wilderness for assistance, that there was not a woman at the bottom of the business. Even in Italy, when the outward talk was of stilettos and midnight walks, a little probing soon served to show me the cause of the mischief was woman—still woman."

"Then you do know something of the use of such instruments," exclaimed the count, searchingly.

"Theoretically, merely theoretically," replied the stranger, carelessly; "a man who professes himself, as I do, a citizen of the world, must know something of every thing."

What further might have passed between these two was for the moment interrupted by a knocking at the gate; and the stranger started up with a brow where suspicion sat deep-seated and watchful. If his intention was escape, he was too late, for the door was heard to open, and voices were audible in the passage. On this his resolution appeared to be taken: he again seated himself, and merely drawing his cloak, which appeared to be his constant companion, closely around him, seemed to be waiting the result.

The first words which were distinctly audible in the kitchen were uttered by Kobolt. "Indeed, gentlemen," said he, "there are none here but inmates of the house."

A glimmer of anxiety seemed to steal its way through De Mara's countenance, and his hand was silently insinuated beneath his vest, as if in preparation for what should follow; but the next remark that was heard from without cleared his countenance; and the emotion under which he had laboured was evidently relieved, either by the words that were uttered, or by the voice that uttered them. His quick glance again turned to the stranger, to observe whether he had traced the transient feeling that had moved him; but so rapidly did the man's dark and penetrating eye dart in all directions, that he was obliged to resign the inquiry without informing himself of any conclusive result.

The words that had constituted the reply to Kobolt were, "If, then, there are none but inmates, there can be no objection to our entry. Make way, sir, in the name of the authorities of Geneva."

The bustle seemed to cease somewhat on this demand; and in another moment Kobolt made his appearance in the kitchen, close followed by four persons, who, by their dress and manner, appeared to belong to the police of Geneva.

"Are these a part of your inmates?" said one of them to the landlord, pointing to De Mara and his new acquaintance.

"They are so for the present," replied Kobolt; "you must, of course, be aware that every inn is liable to have inmates for short, as well as long, periods."

"No doubt, no doubt," returned the spokesman of the party of police; "and you must be aware that it sometimes happens that rogues as well as honest men seek the shelter of such roofs. The syndics of Geneva have of late been much alarmed by acts committed in the city and in the environs of the city; and we are under instructions to make a most peremptory investigation as to all strangers and wanderers."

"I trust," said the count, whose chief employment seemed to be to watch the emotions of his new acquaintance, "I trust, however, that honest men are not to be made to suffer for those who only know the laws to break them?"

"Certainly not," said the officer; "the most any man who is guilty of no crime will suffer, is a little inconvenience, and that he may well put up with, when he remembers, that it is in part to protect him against the attacks of midnight robbers that that inconvenience is inflicted."

"Very true," said De Mara; "but I presume you perceive by this time that there are none here to excite your suspicion, and therefore your inquiry ends."

"Ay, ay," replied the stranger; "so, good-night, gentlemen."

"You get on a little too fast," replied the officer, with a grave smile; "I presume by your accent, that you are not a born Genevese?"

"I certainly am not," answered the count, to whom this question was addressed.

"Then I must trouble you for the production of your passport."

"I have it not with me, but it will perhaps be sufficient to state that I am count De Mara, a French peer at present resident in Geneva."

"Count De Mara!" exclaimed the man with the cloak.

The officer turned sharply round to him, and asked, "Pray, what may that exclamation mean?"

"It was no exclamation," replied he, with all his self-possession returned; "it was merely vouching for my friend's accuracy by repeating his name."

There still seemed to be a lingering doubt in the officer's mind as to De Mara's correct announcement of himself, when one of his followers stepped forward, and, touching his hat, observed, "I can vouch that this gentleman is count De Mara, for I heard him give his evidence before the syndics on the case of Madame Deboos' murder."

De Mara, whose attention had throughout been given to the stranger, hardly knew what to conclude from the outward signs that escaped, so much did they vary, and for so short a period did any one of them remain marked on his countenance to give the nobleman time to analyse it. Once or twice he thought he could perceive his eye quail, and his countenance grow somewhat pale; but before he could assure such a change to himself, the former composure and reckless hardihood of the fellow seemed again to prevail, and his manner to have the same independence of consequences that was ever so striking in his deportment. At the close of the observation of the subaltern of police, however, there was beyond doubt an uneasy movement in his aspect; but again it was subdued, and the same iron firmness once more met the count's scrutinizing glance.

In the mean while the officer who had hitherto conducted the inquiry was engaged in apologizing to the nobleman for the questions his duty had forced him to put to him; and though perhaps there was a lurking something that expressed his surprise at finding a peer of France at such a place, and at such an hour, his words were as soothing and exculpatory as De Mara could require.

As soon as they had been accepted in that sense by the count, the conductor of the police turned his attention more particularly to the stranger.

"And now, sir, will you be so good as to inform me whether you are a Genevese?"

"I should have thought my accent," said he with the cloak, "would have told you that. I am."

De Mara, who a few minutes before had heard him declare himself an Englishman, could hardly suppress an exclamation at the coolness with which he announced himself of Geneva. "However," thought he, "my friend sticks to his motto—'At Rome do as the Romans do.'"

"That is lucky, then," continued the officer, "for as I know nearly every family of the place, the announcement of your name will at once set all suspicion at rest."

"My name," said the stranger, "Is Malvolt!" and he looked at each of the police troop with the rapidity of lightning, as if he would penetrate in a moment what effect that name produced.

"Malvolt—Malvolt!" cried the officer—"the name is not familiar to me. Do any of you know it?" added he, turning round to his fellows.

There was a general negative from the party.

"I suppose," replied he, who had announced himself as Malvolt, "that a man is not to be hanged as an apology for the ignorance of a set of thief-catchers?"

"Thief-catchers!" said the officer, indignantly; "it would be as well to address us, even if we are such, with a civil tongue."

"So it would," returned the other, "that you might for once hear what you never practised yourself. But, by the ghost of Alexander, (who, as

the greatest conqueror, I take to be the greatest thief that ever lived,) I will say this—I have seen the thief-catchers of most countries in Europe, and never did I see such a set of hang-dog countenances as now stand before me."

De Mara, at this sally on the part of the stranger, laughed outright, while the officer, fuming and fretting at so audacious an attack on his mace and dignity, exclaimed, "Hark-ye, my fine fellow, on your own confession, you seem to know more than an honest man ought of gentlemen of my calling, and I shall therefore make bold to order you into custody, that their honors, the syndics, may see what you are good for in the morning. Men, advance, and seize your prisoner."

"Nay, gentlemen," cried De Mara, interposing, "allow me to intercede; will my word be sufficient to bail this rough-tongued associate?"

"Ay, pray intercede, only that I may have my laugh out," said the stranger, who was almost shaking the room with his rude and ungovernable mirth. "There—there," added he, when he could speak plainly, "now you may take off the embargo, and let these prodigious wielders of syndic law make the most of me."

The troop did not seem to take the hint, but stood staring at one another, while the count could not suppress a titter, though he was trying to look as grave as they.

"Then you won't have me, after all?" exclaimed he with the cloak; "come—come—most worthy beck-and-calls of Count De Mara, do you not think you may as well throw off this fierce disguse, and join me in drinking more wisdom to yourselves, and better success to his lordship's next plot?" and with this he threw off a huge beaker of wine that stood near him.

"I thought as much," cried De Mara, who hardly knew whether to be most amused at the sorry figure his associates cut, or annoyed at the stranger having seen through the device by which he hoped to place him entirely at his mercy and control—"I thought as much as soon as I caught a glimpse of that infernal simper of Mon Petit, who looked all the while as if he was lamenting the loss of his fine clothes, and wondering how the devil he got into such a calfskin."

"Phoo, phoo, count," added the stranger, though his voice could hardly be heard in the general chuckle that pervaded it, "do not give all the blame to one gentleman; there are just four of them; and I present them with a quarter a-piece, unless, indeed, that terrible gentleman with the beard is resolved to have the lion's share."

"Hark-ye, sir, cried Maravelli, who was the one pointed at, and who by no means relished the laugh raised by this remark, "you will do as well to leave those observations alone; for though I resign my character as thief-catcher, you may perhaps find that I know how to swinge a rogue who forgets his manners."

"Not if the count becomes bail for me, I trust," replied the stranger, with another of his peals of laughter.

"Well, well, I confess the plot, my good fellow," said De Mara, "so let us say no more about it; and let the case stand as it did before these wonder-working gentry made their appearance; to whom, however, though the matter has failed, I return kind thanks for their exertions. And now, landlord, bring another dozen of the black cork, and we will finish the night in a style that shall reconcile every body."

"Ah, most noble count! now, indeed, you go the way to win my heart," said the stranger: "did you think iron fetters could be half so binding as those rosy ones which I hear Kobolt clinking in the cupboard?"

"But how came you to dissolve the fetters that were so cunningly prepared?"

"Why," said the other, "I will not deny that the first approach of these gentry gave me a qualm; though, for all that, I am a good citizen and an honest man."

"Oh, of course," ejaculated Kobolt, as he placed the wine that was ordered on the table.

"Landlord, know your distance," returned he of the cloak, "or I shall give my noble friend a hint to examine the items of your bill."

"But," said Mon Petit, "we have not yet heard what led to our detection."

"Why," said the man, "the first thing that gave me a suspicion was, that your hands were much too clean for the office you professed. Look at mine—they are nearer the true tint, although they have undergone some unusual washing to-night. Then I could not smell tobacco when you entered; and who ever heard of a thief-taker who was not a pipe-taker as well? Besides, Kobolt, for he has a share in the blunder, opened the door much too soon to your knock, so that from the first I suspected there was some cajolery to be watched for."

"And what finally turned these conjectures into certainty?" asked De Mara.

"Why, by the time which the gentleman with—the whiskers—(I beg his pardon, but, as I don't know his name, it is the only description I have for him)—by the time he began to examine me more particularly, my mind was pretty well resolved; and when he said he knew the name of every Genevese, and yet believed my statement when I announced myself with such a queer accent as I must plead guilty to on my tongue, I determined, should he ask me my name, to put the whole matter to the test."

"But I do not see," cried Maravelli, "how telling me that your name was Mal—Mal—what the deuce was the uncouth sound?—was any test at all."

"Ay, there it is," cried the stranger; "you cannot even remember that the name I gave you was Malvolt. Ask Kabolt here, and he will tell you that that was the name of the only famous neck-or-nothing that has been heard-of in these parts for the last ten years; so that, had you really been a gentleman vermin-catcher, the mention of that name would have roused your suspicions in a moment, instead of which it passed as quietly with you as if I had given you some name that is to be met with in every street of every town of every country of Europe."

"I might have guessed," said De Mara, "that so travelled and accomplished a gentleman as yourself would have been too much for these new traders in untried lands;—but now to business, for daylight will soon be pressing upon us, and we must separate. I have already given you a pretty broad hint as to the way in which your services will be required. If you are willing to serve me, give me, as a guarantee, a brief sketch of your life, that I may understand in what way your abilities will be most available; and I pledge myself, in return, to let you have a retaining fee of a hundred louis-d'or, with an additional hundred on your completing my directions to my satisfaction."

"With all my heart," cried the stranger; "for I can see no reason why my life should not be recorded, as well as that of other great characters, and perhaps I may be lucky enough to find a biographer in one of these gentlemen; for that seems now-a-days of such easy assumption, that he who can barely spell is sure to put forth his claims under the cloak of some other man's life."

"Come," replied the count, "I must lay a *veto* on all episodes in digression. Time presses, and you must be clever at crowding much into little, or we shall never get to an end at this sitting."

"Never fear," said the other; "I could put the whole in a parenthesis;

but I begin:—In the first place, you must understand that my name is Urfort. I have already told you that England had the honour of my birth."

"And yet," remarked one, "Urfort is not an English name."

"Never mind for that," cried Urfort: "it is a very good name, let it belong to what country it may. As to what passed in England or her possessions (for much of my youth was spent in her colonies,) it has nothing to do with the distinguishing features of my life, and I therefore say no more about it;—but some foolish family-matters induced me, about twenty years ago, to set my foot on the continent of Europe, and never since that day have I quitted it. As to England, it is a queer place to live in, and I never felt any desire to return: the people are all mad, one way or another; and they ask so many questions about what their neighbours are doing, it never would have suited my solitary temperament. For a long time I sojourned with my wife in Spain."

"What!" cried the count—"such an independent gentleman, as you, marry! Who would have dreamt it?"

"I don't know," replied Urfort, "but that marriage is the most independent state after all; but I shall not stop to argue that point now. However, our sojourn in Spain was suddenly broken up, through my fear that the country was too hot for my lady: so we went to Sicily."

"That, one would think, would be making bad worse instead of better. If the climate of Spain was too hot, how could you expect to be cooler in Sicily."

"I did not say it was the climate of Spain that was too hot—but the country. The fact was, we were living at a village a couple of miles from Seville, when I happened to hear that an old sweetheart of my wife had made his appearance in that city. My disposition is by no means jealous; but, as to trusting a woman within reach of a former flame, under a Spanish sun—to have done so would have been to entitle myself to a most especial place in the general madness I so lately launched against my countrymen;—so, you see, Sicily might be as cool as Caucasus in my philosophy."

"And how fared you at Sicily?"

"Humph! why—good and bad, which I have found to be the common mixture all the world over. However, I got into a very expensive sort of connexion in the interior of the island; and my wife liked it still less than I."

"I suppose," cried Maravelli, "she found Sicily as much too hot for you, as you feared Seville might be for her."

"It is not for mere man," replied Urfort, with a sneer, "to pretend to develope all a silly woman's suspicions. The end of it, however, was, that she asked me to go; and, as I found that I owed more money there than I well knew how to pay, I agreed, and we next took up our abode at Venice; but I soon found that that would not do. Would you believe it? —the streets there are all water, and the highways as deep—as deep—as the Lake of Geneva. I very speedily saw that that was not the spot for me. I loved hunting too well to stay in a place, where, before you had doubled three times, you were sure to find yourself face to face with the ocean."

"Are you sure," asked the count, "that it did not sometimes happen that you were the hare instead of the huntsman? You speak so feelingly of the double, that I cannot help thinking you must have had opportunities of knowing the value of it."

"I am sure of nothing," replied the other, testily, "but that Venice did not suit me at all. So then we tried Padua, and after that Milan: then we went north to Vienna, west to Frankfort, and, skirting round by the Spanish side of France, down we came to Nice."

"Why, you seem never to have been happy unless you were in motion."

"It was the prescription of my physician—he trembled for the stagnation of my blood;—so, when the weather was fine, and I could be out of doors, we travelled; and when it was foul, and I was confined within, I turned my wife into a kingdom, and practised on her. The little hurricane used to call it tyrannizing, and though I told her, over and over again, that it was absolutely necessary for the good of my health, I never could persuade her to submit with patience;—and the recollection of this brings me to Florence. Never was such a season known, as followed the one after we got there! Rain, rain—pour, pour—it seemed as if we were called on to wish good-by to Italy, and that the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Venice were about to meet to compare notes, and to bury the intervening country under its waters, in order that they might carry on their communication the more affectionately. The natural consequence of all this bad weather was, that I was obliged to resort to my home exercise, which my wife took so ill that, one day, I lost her."

"Lost her! what, in the flood?"

"Deuce take me if I know how—but I lost her: for awhile I was fool enough to try to find her; but I soon learned to think, with the Irishman, that I had gained a loss, for, when I lost my wife, I lost my children too;—so that, from a man *with* incumbrances, I became a man *without* incumbrances—a gay bachelor. And it was in good time, too; for my paternal fortune had long been on the wane, and by this time was pretty well threadbare."

"And what did the bachelor do with himself?"

"Oh! he took to a jolly, roving life, sometimes at one place, and sometimes at another, as the wind and tide of inclination or circumstances drove him. One time I fell in with the clergy at Rome, and had hopes of being a cardinal; but they found out that I was not discreet enough for them, so they dismissed me for being too honest: another, I met with a troop of soldiers, though, I must say, I never could find out under whose commission they acted; but pay was plenty, and wine was abundant, and I dare say I should have ended my days there, only one day, the lieutenant and I being together happened to find a watch set with brilliants and some other trifles, and somehow it happened that we could not agree in the division; so I gave him a push, and he fell down, while I walked off with the booty; and I never heard any thing more of the troop, except that the lieutenant was found dead on the spot where I pushed him down: I presume he died of chagrin. Gentlemen, I presume I need not pursue my travels farther;—suffice it to say, here I am, and ready to earn the count's two hundred louis."

"But, at least, let us know what brought you to Geneva," said De Mara, "and what you have been doing while here. It may have an effect upon my determination."

"The incident that brought me to Geneva," replied Urfort, "was a curious one. Money ran short, and I happened to hear that an old friend of mine, who had taken a fancy to me after I had lost my wife, was resident here;—so I determined to pay her a visit, in the hope that she might be better off than myself, and be inclined to assist me."

"And how came it that you failed in this scheme?" asked De Mara.

"She died just as I found her out; and, as she left no will in my favour, I did not care to press my claim on her executors. My money, however, was all gone, and look which way I would, I could find nothing to do;—and—and there's an end on't. Count De Mara knows the rest as well as I do myself."

The grey of the morning had been for some time creeping in at the windows of the kitchen where the party was assembled; and De Mara was not sorry to find that Urfort had arrived at the close of his narrative, as he

had no desire that those who were neighbours to the inn, where he had been sojourning for the night, should perceive his egress thence. He, therefore, hastily gave his new ally a supply of money to furnish his present wants, and having fully instructed him where to meet him in order that matters might be further adjusted, the count, in company with the mock officers of police, evacuated the place, and made the best of their way to their respective lodgings, with many a suppressed laugh and chuckling whisper, as they commented on the various adventures of that fruitful night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Bell. Madam, I dare swear he loves you.
Areth. Oh, you're a cunning one, and taught to lie
For your lord's credit; but thou know'st a lie
That bears this sound is welcomer to me
Than any truth that says he loves me not.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER'S PHILASTER.

IT was late before the count shook off the heavy slumber to which he had yielded himself on his arrival at his lodgings; and on looking at his watch, and perceiving how far the day was advanced, his first act was to ring the chamber bell, and summon his valet to his bed-side. But though the hour for the arrival of Urfort was passed, the servant had not seen any one at the hotel who answered the description.

"Then assist me to dress, Jacotot," said the count, "for I have business on hand that will not brook delay. But are you quite sure that no such person has been asking for me—a dark, swarthy, thick-set man, with huge whiskers and mustachios—about fifty or so?"

"Quite sure, my lord; indeed there has been no one here, except a man, who by his appearance I took to be a dancing-master, he was dressed so fine, and with such an amazing profusion of curly locks."

"About what age was this son of Terpsichore? though it cannot be he that I expect, for heaven knows he has as little of the dancing muse as any of the heaviest sons of earth I ever saw."

"Oh, at the outside he could not be much more than forty;—I should hardly think so much, my lord; for he skipped about like a heifer, and when I told him you were asleep, and must not be disturbed, he bowed six bows in rotation with the rapidity of a weaver's shuttle, and so made his exit."

"Some fellow, no doubt, who would have made an attack on my pocket in the shape of a subscription for a new set of cotillions, or a volume of love-sick ballads to his muse. I am well rid of him."

"I am not quite sure, my lord," replied the servant, "that you are altogether rid of him, for his last bow was accompanied with an intimation that he should do himself the honour of calling again to pay his *devoirs* to the most noble count De Mara."

"Then I trust to you to stand sentinel, and prevent his entry. Tell him that I am from home—or that I never subscribe—or that I am a sworn devotee, and an enemy to all dancing. Tell him what you please, but see that he does not get admission; and if such a one as I have described should call, he is to be shown up to me immediately."

"I shall observe, my lord."

"And now, you may go; but be in waiting when I ring for my coffee."

Jacotot bowed himself out of the apartment, though not quite so rapidly

or so ceremoniously as the dancing-master whom he had celebrated; and the count found himself again alone.

The continued absence of Urfort was troublesome to him; and he could not help, as he waited (watching the moments,) blaming himself for having leagued his cause with an individual of so doubtful a purpose. In his present predicament he was stationed like one on whom the Necromancer's wily art has but half taken effect—betwixt action and the will to act. He could proceed by himself; and ever and anon he shook off the expectation of his laggard ally, in the resolution of trusting only to his own powers of operation; and then as often he returned to the wish of working in company, and again counted the minutes of absence that prevented his applying the energies of his mind to a consideration of the difficulties by which he was beset. Any sound that broke in upon the doubtful monotony of the scene roused him from his profitless task, and he blushed to himself at being found in so silly and wavering a humour. Why could he not take his mind out of this single subject? He would sing, and try what the Troubadours would do for him—but half a stanza brought him to his own serenade, and the rapid and eventful circumstances of the preceding night brought him back to his former train of thinking. Were there not better hopes in a book? And he took up one in the firm determination that it should employ his thoughts, and teach him patience, but neither would this do: wit, mirth, dulness, or poetic fire passed him by with equal ineffectiveness; and the whole tending of his ideas would revert in spite of himself to Madeline, to Wahrend, and to Urfort;

"So that the words he read he takes for mocks."

Any thing would be better than such solitary annoyance; and he almost repented him that he had ordered Jacotot to refuse the petitioning dancing-master admission: his impertinence might be amusing, and his strain of bows and *congès* might serve to distract his attention until the sluggish instrument of his next project should arrive.

It almost seemed as if the unadmitted visiter of the morning jumped with his turn of resolution, for a loud wrangle was heard on the stairs just as this thought flitted across his mind, and Jacotot's voice was heard loudly exclaiming against some one who seemed to be insinuating his way towards the count's apartment.

De Mara, glad of any interruption that should break the tedious minutes, opened the door, and found his valet in the midst of a wordy war with a person so gaily tricked out and bedizened with the most extravagant favours of art, that he had not much difficulty in guessing that the intruder was the individual whom he had directed Jacotot to exclude.

"Let the gentleman come in," he cried; "I find myself more at leisure than I expected, and shall be happy to hear his errand.'

The valet, in obedience to the voice of his master, made way for the man of many colours, who danced himself into the room with an innumerable number of attitudes, "making a leg," as the old Dramatists so humorously call it, after every two or three steps. Jacotot gave his master a piteous look, as much as to say, "I assure you, I could not help it;" and then withdrew with a bow somewhat more studied than that which he generally executed, as if desirous of giving the pendulous stranger a lesson of how the thing was done when it came into dignified hands.

As soon as the gentleman whose sole profession appeared to be agility had fairly watched the disconsolate lacquey out of the apartment, he threw himself on the sofa and burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. That laugh declared his disguise at once, for it was too remarkable ever to have been heard without being immediately recognised on a second effusion.

'Heavens!" cried the count, "is it you, Urfort? Then after all you were more punctual to your appointment than myself: but what is the meaning of all this mummery?"

"Merely that I was willing," replied Urfort, "to give my excellent patron an opportunity of judging of my abilities. Even his penetrating eye did not detect the jolly carouser of past midnight in the fantastic representation of a *comme il faut petit-maître*."

"I must confess you baffled my recognition: why, you look ten years younger than last night."

"So much the better to qualify me to become Cupid's messenger."

"But how have you managed it? What has become of your grisly locks—your hollow eye—and your overhanging beard and mustachios?"

"Oh, their absence," said the man with a laugh, "is easily accounted for. A skilful barber made a clearance of locks, beard, and mustachios, almost in a breath, while his stock supplied me with these flowing curls, and it was the bountiful supper of your own providing last night that has filled the hollow of my eye and the wrinkles of my cheek: it was care that had made the holes, then why should not comfort fill them up again?"

"Well, at all events I am glad to see so advantageous a change: but I am afraid that this dress is not exactly suited for the use for which I want you."

"Then," said Urfort, "it shall be changed with the rapidity of leger-demain. All that I was anxious for was to make such an appearance that not even the most scrutinizing eye should recognise me; and the experiment already made upon your lordship has fully satisfied me of the result."

"What are these persons in Geneva whose recognition you fear?" asked De Mara, with an inquiring look.

"Why, a man never knows when he shall meet a creditor. They grow up in every soil, and stick live ivy when they once get a hold."

"That's true," said the count, "and it would mar your activity dreadfully if you once get into such clutches. But now to business, for the day creeps apace, and we ought to be at work."

De Mara then explained his situation with Madeline to its full extent, and described how this new intruder Wahrend had intervened and checked his prospects, when he was in hopes that the *amende honorable* on his part would have induced his mistress to pardon the error into which his desire of trying her affection had led him. The first object, therefore, in furtherance of which he wished to call in the assistance of Urfort, was to ascertain the exact position in which the Swiss stood, relatively to Madeline, that De Mara might understand how far he was to be regarded as a dangerous rival, and whether it was necessary for him to proceed to peremptory measures to remove him from the scene of action. Urfort, while this account was being related, showed that he could be a good listener, as he had before evinced that he was able to be a bold talker; and the count, as he proceeded with his story, felt assurance in the efficiency of this new agent, when he observed how his manners settled into attention, and his eye, which generally roved with the freedom of his tongue, became staid and animate only as the features of the tale called it into action. "Now," cried the nobleman, as he finished his relation of such circumstances as he thought necessary for a right understanding of the case, "now you are perhaps as well able to judge as I what is the first step to be taken: but let this be remembered—that whatever is agreed, it is absolutely requisite that it should be practically brought to bear immediately."

"I feel it with even more force than your lordship," replied Urfort, with a smile; "for the second hundred louis that waits the successful completion, will certainly keep that necessity present to my recollection."

"Have you any proposition to make? Or shall I give you half an hour for consideration?"

"I hate consideration," cried the other; "it savours too much of doubt; the greatest hits the world has ever witnessed have always been *coups-de-main*, and I have no doubt that we are about to add one to the number. The only preliminary step must be for me to see the girl, for though I doubt not your lordship's powers of discrimination, I have got into the habit of always drawing my own conclusions as to character; and I should be labouring in a sort of blank field, if I had not the living picture before my mind."

"That is well bethought. But how shall I obtain an interview for you?"

"That is easily managed. Install me in Mr. Jacotot's post of honour; let me figure in your lordship's livery, and with a letter in my pocket, the way is clear enough."

"But will not that be giving you too low a standing to find grace in her eyes? The girl has some notions of haughtiness and pride."

"Oh, never fear. If it is as I suspect, the very lowness of my station will make her more ready to use me as I purpose, if the conjectures I have come to on the strength of your story are well founded."

"And to what do those conjectures amount?"

"Under permission, I will describe them at another opportunity; time presses, and it would therefore be mischievous to waste it by dwelling on them if they are wrong; and if they turn out to be right, they will make a better show when I can strengthen them with such facts as shall draw to the same point."

"Right, right," returned the count; "I will therefore only detain you while I write a few lines, and you may make use of that opportuity in turning over Jacotot's wardrobe, which I dare say will be sufficient to equip you for your adventure."

Half an hour served to accomplish both these objects; and, with a few more parting words of advice from De Mara, Urfort took his way to Madeline's abode.

With his new dress he had put on another new manner; and, as the count watched him through the street, he was again obliged to confess to himself that he could not, in his new lacquey, trace any of the style of that reckless would-be-suicide who had obtained his acquaintance in so extraordinary a mode. The smart and well-dressed valet trod the pavement with a sober and measured step, as if he had been as demure as Jacotot himself; but, at the same time, there was an insinuating address in his gait, that left far behind the still and repelling attitude of him to whom De Mara at first compared him, and which seemed well calculated to attract the attention of those who were willing to take the first impression which a man's outward appearance might yield, without waiting for some mental companion to confirm it.

Urfort, who was willing to form his first acquaintanceship with Madeline after a fashion of his own, took care, on arriving at her abode, to find his way to her apartment without suffering the servant of the house to announce his errand.

It was by this step, the unceremoniousness of which he hoped would be palliated by the consideration of whose representative he was, that he expected to be able to ascertain, with something like satisfactory precision, the state of Madeline's respective feelings towards Wahrend and the count. On entering the apartment, however, he found Madeline alone; and though this was one of the opportunities he wanted, he would have been better pleased to have found her in company with the Swiss, that he might have watched their conduct towards each other with a jealous eye: it was, however, necessary to explain what had brought him there, and he volun-

teered the count's billet for that purpose. Madeline, who had not, on the first moment of his entrance, recognised the livery in which he was attired, had started up with something like anger in her countenance, to demand the reason of the intrusion, when the superscription of the proffered note caught her eye. The well-known characters told her from whom it came, and a gentle blush bespoke the emotion that accompanied the discovery; her delicate and finely-tapered fingers slightly trembled as she broke the seal, and there was a suppressed nervousness about her general manner as she prepared to read the contents. Was it that she remembered the contents of De Mara's last letter, and dreaded what this might now contain?—or was it that she was apprehensive of the effect of her coquetry with Wahrend at the Plain Palais might have produced on the count?—and her heart trembled at the opportunity offered for solving the question.

Urfort watched all that passed with a cunning eye; and though he took care to tutor its flashes to the more respectful glance of a menial, he did not the less note all those outward signs the maiden's consciousness betrayed of what was passing within.

The note, however, was scarcely sufficient to determine her either one way or the other; it was little more than a respectful petition from the count, to be allowed to pay his *devoirs* to her that morning, if her leisure would permit. In the words there was nothing exceptionable; and though she conned them again and again, all that she could make out from them was, that the style had not that ardent flow which had characterized the nobleman's epistles before a shadow had been thrown over their correspondence by the untowardness of late occurrences;—and yet, why was *she* to find fault with this? It was she that had repressed his advances towards a renewal of a perfect understanding between them; and therefore that the count should have adopted her cue was rather indicative of his obedience to her wishes, than any thing offensively intended on his part. True! most true!—but still she felt a shivering at her heart, as she repeated to herself the studied and measured politeness of his phrases.

At length she remembered that De Mara's servant was waiting for her answer; and, as she looked up to bid him stay while she wrote one, it was again brought to her recollection that she had never seen his face before in the suite of that nobleman.

"You will be so good as to wait," said she, "while I write to his lordship; but I do not remember ever having seen you before among his dependants."

"No, Ma'm'selle," replied Urfort, ingeniously throwing into his manner all the rusticity of one whom even fine clothes, a fine place, and a fine city, could not convert from his country habits—"no, Ma'm'selle, I only left father last week."

"Your father must be an old man, for you cannot yourself be less than forty."

"There it is: father's got old, and the farm does not go on as it did; so he dressed me out to come and find our landlord, that I might ask for a long day for the rent."

"And who is your landlord?"

"Why Count De Mara, to be sure! Some of his estates lie near Lyons, and as we heard he was staying at Geneva, I came to try and find him; and so he said he would do what he could for poor father, and gave me a place in his service. I do hope I shall be able to keep it; for it is a fine thing to get such clothes as these, and pay nothing for them, Ma'm'selle."

"Well, well—do your best, and I dare say you will not lose your situation: here is something to welcome you to Geneva, and if my good word can be of use—"

"What?—money, and a good word too!" cried the valet. "Heaven

bless your ladyship! I am sure you can do what you like with my master, for M. Jacotot told me so himself."

"Madeline's eyes glistened at the words, though her pride would not let her confess to herself that the speech of the servant could warm her to pleasure. Not caring, however, to trust herself with any further conversation, she turned her attention to the task before her, and commenced her reply to De Mara.

But scarcely had she written the first words, ere she was interrupted by the entrance of Wahrend: he made his appearance at an unlucky moment; for the heart of the maiden had, in spite of her pride, softened towards the count, and was therefore in ill accord to grant a smiling welcome to him whom her perturbed and uneasy spirit had set up as a rival to the nobleman.

"Good morrow to the deserter from Unwalden!" cried the Swiss, gaily. "May we again talk of what was, and again shall be!—of the day that has been, and the day that is to come, when the fatiguing and hurried city life shall be changed for the tranquil enjoyment of nature!"

"And why is the city life to be thrown aside," replied Madeline, "for the dull monotony of nature!"

Wahrend looked somewhat astonished at this question. At length—"Nay," said he, "it is rather for me to ask that query; for it was you that only yesterday so bitterly inveighed against the troubling annoyances of Geneva, and so sweetly praised the calm pleasures of Unwalden."

"And to-day I inveigh against the dull sameness of Unwalden, and am in love with the gay scenes of Geneva. Is there any marvel in that? The prosing logician takes on himself to argue on both sides of the case—and is a woman to have less privilege than so heavy a piece of mechanism? But I have not even time to contend with myself now, much less to contradict you. You see the servant waits for my answer, and therefore your next visit must serve to settle this question."

Wahrend, who had been hitherto standing in expectation of a seat being offered, perceived that this was meant as a hint for his departure; and, though he did not feel much pleased at being so unceremoniously dismissed, his simple nature led him to confess to himself that it was very possible the maiden had a letter of importance to write, and that, at all events, he had no right to dispute her commands.

"But when may I come again?" asked he, eager at least to take this opportunity of fixing her to a time of her own.

"It is not worth an appointment," returned Madeline—"I am generally at home, and you must therefore be content to take your chance. To-morrow, or the next day—"

"To-morrow, if you please," interrupted Wahrend; and he made a hasty retreat, as if desirous of affording her no opportunity to retract from this overture.

Madeline's attention now reverted to Urfort: she looked at him, and it seemed to her as if he had hardly heard a word of what had passed, so simple was his guise, and so intent the manner in which he gazed on the bijouterie with which Madeline's taste had ornamented the apartment. The glance she gave him having led her to this conclusion, she did not care to call off his attention by addressing him; and she therefore again prepared to write a reply to the count's request. But her mind was in a strange agitation of doubt: still eager to pursue her stratagem of revenge, and to retaliate on De Mara's misdoing by setting Wahrend in apparent opposition to him, she felt induced to write to him as she had said to the Swiss—"It is not worth an appointment, and therefore you must be content to take your chance;"—and then again, from this intention she was turned by the simple phrase of this new valet of the count—"I am sure you can do what you like with my master, for M. Jacotot told me so himself."

Homely and unassuming as it was, coming from the lips of this apparent clown, it had struck a tender chord in her heart, and the string was still vibrating in unison with the touch.

"I am sure you can do what you like with my master!" Almost unconsciously she repeated the phrase again and again to herself, as she held her pen motionless in her hand, from want of resolution which way to decide. Do what she liked! Oh that she could but assure herself of that!—Oh that this one doubt might be resolved into certainty!—Yes, that once done, her impatient temper would brook aught else of ambiguity, for the sake of having full assurance poured upon her soul that she was paramount in the heart of De Mara.

And was there no way in which she could obtain the precious satisfaction for which her mind yearned?—This last thought was a busy one, and it roused the whole stock of imagination to meet the query. Still the pen trembled from its office, and still the question was rife in her brain.

The fine and indistinct thread of her ideas was shaken, but not broken, by the voice of Urfort—

"Shall I wait," cried he, with a bow, "Ma'm'selle, while you write?—or will you send a verbal answer?"

"Presently, presently," murmured Madeline, as if half-abstracted, and unconscious of the question.

"I beg pardon," returned the other: "I would not have spoken, only I know something of master's temper, though I have been but three days with him; and I am sure he is counting every moment till I return with an answer."

Still this thought was with the maiden—"Were there no means by which she could obtain assurance of De Mara's heart-feeling towards her?"—But it was misty as a dream—itself a sort of dream of the mind fatigued, though the body slept not; and as when Morpheus rules the brain, it admits strange and inconsequential additions to the picture first painted on its tablets, so here, by some unbid admixture, the thought of Urfort was joined to that of De Mara, and they were simultaneously presented to her mind, as she again asked herself the question—"Were there no means by which she could obtain assurance of De Mara's heart-feeling towards her?"

A sort of answer, involuntary on her part, and of a-piece with a dream-taught fancy, presented itself to her mind in the words that had fallen from Urfort—"I know something of master's temper, though I have been but three days with him." The expression contained the rudiments of observation, perception, and calculation; and it forced upon her imagination the idea, that one who possessed these qualities might be able to afford the key that she required to unlock the mystery of De Mara's secret feelings.

Madeline's hurried and impetuous vivacity of temperament has been but ill described, if the reader is not prepared to admit the possibility of a thought like this, which, in more regulated dispositions, would have been transient and unacted on, taking fast hold of her mind, and so deeply striking root there, as to give a character and tone to her determination. The ardour and rapidity with which she arrived at a conclusion, left her no time to debate upon the after-consequences that such a conclusion was likely to entail upon her. She had no spice of Macbeth's nervous humour in her constitution, as attributed to him by his lady—

> Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would*,
> Like the poor cat i' th' adage:

but was ever pressed forward, by the fiery urging of her passions, to make thought and execution go hand in hand.

No sooner therefore had she the feeling that it was possible to employ

Urfort, so that he might assist her in plumbing the depths of De Mara's real feelings, than she overlooked all the invidiousness of employing a servant against his master, or of putting herself within the power of a menial's confession. She had one want, and one way of satisfying that want; and she could but ill digest the task of weighing whether to embrace the opportunity was not inflicting more mischief on herself than she could derive good from its employment.

Whatever awkwardness she might feel in addressing herself to Urfort on the subject was sedulously removed by him as it presented itself in the course of their conversation, though at the same time he took care never to lose sight of that rustic simplicity of manner, which had perhaps been the means of more readily inducing her to employ him as her agent on this errand of love and jealousy, as it was a trait of character which she was easily able to understand, as well as one well calculated to prevent her imbibing any suspicions of the real nature of his errand. Whenever difficulties, therefore, made their appearance, and she seemed to hesitate on the brink, he was always on the watch to drop some little phrase, which, without compromising the rusticity he had assumed, was sufficient to act as a stepping-stone to her determination, by helping her over those embarrassments, which a consciousness of the unfairness of the task she was requiring at his hands repeatedly placed in her way; and at length they were altogether got rid of, by his judiciously hinting that his willingness to undertake the office arose from his anxiety to forward an affair on which, as he had been assured by M. Jacotot, his master's happiness so materially depended. This was a safe point of view for both parties to assume, and it was set, upon either hand, as the standard of their intentions.

If the bond of alliance that had been thus entered upon by Madeline had been drawn up with that diplomatic skill which seems innate in all those born to government offices and foreign missions, its heads would have been found to be three:—1st. That Urfort was to inform Madeline, by every means in his power, of the real state of De Mara's feelings towards her. 2nd. That Madeline was to promote Urfort's interest by means of her good word to the count; and 3rd. That both parties were, from time to time, to suggest such measures as appeared best calculated to bring De Mara to that state of feeling, without which Madeline felt that her whole existence would be a blank.

The full and entire discussion of these three points, however, were suddenly checked by the entrance of Albert, who, during the whole morning, had been absent, but whose movements were so irregular, that his sister never knew when to expect him; but, though the strange impulse under which he seemed to be acting led her not to be surprised at any of his erratic movements, yet, on this occasion, his entry caught her unawares; and in the sudden stop that it put upon her conversation with Urfort, she felt the first suggestion of her having formed a suspicious and unjustifiable compact. It seemed, too, as if her coadjutor had fallen under the same impression; for, the moment he cast his eyes on the youth, a deep suffusion overspread his countenance, and he turned his face away from the door, as though anxious to avoid any glances of inquiry that Albert might throw on him. Madeline, whose conscience told her that she had been interrupted in the performance of that which was indefensible, marked the action, and attributed it to his sharing the same feeling which was instinct in her own bosom.

"Good morrow, dear Madeline!" cried the brother—"but I interrupt you?"

"No, no," replied the maiden, hastily: "I was but detaining the count's servant, while I wrote a word in reply to a note that has just been brought me."

"Then tell me," said Albert, "what is the matter with Wahrend? I met him a few minutes ago, as I was bending towards the lake for my solitary ramble, and he seemed quite to have lost that gaiety which so possessed his whole manner last night, as we sat and talked of sweet Unwalden."

"Nay, I know not what has overcome him," returned the sister; "do you take me for the mistress of his secrets?"

"No, no," cried the youth, with a smile; "we all have trouble enough in taking care of our own."

Madeline turned pale at these words, and dared not look her brother in the face to inquire from the expression of that, with what feeling it was that he had used words which touched so nearly on her present sensations.

"But," continued he, with a quick fire lighting his eye, "when I saw how downcast he looked, and how he had lost the active and aspiring spirit that animated his every word last night, I could not help pitying him; for we have known Wahrend long, and as long as we have known him, so long have we known the goodness of his heart; and what shame would it be to take advantage of his simple nature to inflict a pang upon his honest purpose!"

Madeline again would have examined her brother's face, but she dared not, lest she should challenge his gaze on the perturbed questions that were moving through the regions of her countenance. All she could do was to ask, "and did he give no reason for the change?"

"He did not, my sister; and yet I guessed one. And as the thought of how it might be came across my mind, I forgot the dear delightful solitudes to which I had devoted my day, and thought I would come and speak to you about it."

"Albert, Albert," cried the girl, who could no longer mistake what was meant, and who felt all her customary blood kindling to the strife, "Albert, what is this? I have seen dark and undiscoverable things working in *your* mind—but what questions have I asked? Leave me to my way, brother;—leave me my way; for though there is something now about you which will not let me dare to use you as was once my habit, I am still the same creature—still made up of the same sensations, love, and antipathies, as when I resisted our uncle's dictation on the same subject."

"You say right," ejaculated Albert, in a tone as if he would shrink from the slightest hint at the secret that held such empire over him—"You say right! and I fear that nothing excellent, even all-excellent, as what lies buried here," and he struck his hand on his brain, "can be altogether separate from error."

"Let us then exchange our forgiveness," said Madeline, extending her hand. "Even one word of anger between us is all too much for the whole of our lives, and I would have the consolatory thought that one human being at least has entire affection for me."

"Have it, my Madeline—have it!" cried the enthusiastic youth; "there may be strange things written on the table of my heart, but never can they obliterate the fond memory of my sister. But we will talk more of this anon."

And then, after an affectionate kiss on the forehead of the maiden, he quitted the apartment, again to bury himself in nature's recesses, and again to brood over the arcanum that was rapt in his seething brain.

Urfort had listened to all that had passed with a curious ear, but he made no observations upon it. Why, indeed, he had been suffered to remain a spectator of the scene, he could not well understand. That Madeline should not object to his being there was not perhaps so extraordinary, for she had already trusted him too deeply with the great master-passion of her heart, to heed the new light that the few words which had

passed between her and her brother might afford him; but that Albert should have overlooked his presence was somewhat remarkable, nor did he know well how to account for it but on the supposition that the youth was really hardly conscious of it. This indeed might be, for the wily agent had marked his eye distracted, and his manner, which spoke of things separate and distinct from the common course of the world's events; even when speaking of Wahrend, he had seemed loth to do it, and had only pressed his words to the service, as if in the discharge of an unwelcome but necessary duty.

Madeline's mind had been diverted from her former train of thought by the subject that Albert had introduced; and when left again alone with Urfort, she felt as if she could not immediately restore herself to her previous reflections.

"I will write an answer to the count," said she, "and we will renew this subject to-morrow; and the mean time will afford you an opportunity for obtaining information."

The note was soon written, and Urfort was dismissed with it, with a handsome present for himself, and a renewed injunction to be watchful and vigilant in her cause. He promised all and every thing; and with a bow executed in the just standard of a rustic transposed, he took his leave for the day.

In the mean time De Mara had been awaiting the return of his messenger with much impatience, for he had imbibed a sufficiently good opinion of Urfort's powers of penetration and knowledge of the world to believe that he had found in him one who was capable, if he pleased, of affording him great and material assistance in the uncertainty in which he was placed; and that he would please, he thought he had sufficiently secured by the amount of the rewards he had offered him, and even by the innate love of mischief which seemed to possess him, and which would lead him to side with a plot which had so notable a purpose for its object.

At length the mock valet arrived with the letter in his hand, and the assumed rusticity of manner again changed for the fear-nothing recklessness of demeanour that had hitherto marked his intercourse with the nobleman.

"Success, success, my noble patron!" cried he, as soon as he had gained the count's presence: I bow with all reverence to Madeline Schvolen's lord and master."

De Mara's eyes brightened at the address of the dependant, as he demanded, "but is it true? Is Wahrend nothing, and am I all?"

"All and every thing," cried the other, gaily; "as for Wahrend he is a mere bugbear, only set up to frighten the naughty boy that would fret the temper of his mistress. My own eyes have witnessed his dismissal, or at least what would be held to amount to as much by any but a dumpling-headed Swiss."

"Excellent!" returned the count; "but how was it managed?"

"'Faith, it hardly required management. The girl was eager enough to have my aid and abetment, and only required a very gentle hint from me to set the proposition afloat. Mark my words, noble count—she loves you as the apple of her eye; nay, she has all but confessed as much to me in so many words."

"But how? but how?"

"Oh, hang explanations. It is so long since I have done any work, that to-day's labour makes me pant like a horse with his first gallop after a whole summer's turning to grass. I must soothe myself with a bottle of Kobolt's best, or I shall never be in condition for to-morrow."

"With all my heart!" said De Mara, "but a little conversation over the bottle will do no harm."

"Faugh! what—mix business and pleasure together! No, that will never do; it is like the apothecary's vile art, who would dispense his

noxious poison by mixing it with peppermint and cinnamon water. No, if more than the result must be told, let it be thrown off at once, that I may be left to throw my legs on a chair, and do nothing but give welcome to the jolly liquor. Come, what is it you would know?"

"Nay, that is a question for yourself to answer. But an outline will serve."

"You have that already; Wahrend was told that his presence was *un peu trop*, as your country folk would express it; and I am duly accredited spy and betrayer of my master's secrets, on the faith of a present of ten louis-d'or."

"The jade! to bribe my own servant—but I am glad of it, for, in keeping no terms with me, she teaches me to keep none with her; and should she upbraid me, may perhaps hear of it. But again, and again, are you sure of it?"

"As sure of it as that the ten louis are in my pocket, and that this is your answer to your billet."

"Then she is mine!" cried the count, in a tone of exultation, "and she may play off her tool as she pleases. She shall be Helen to my Mount Ida Shepherd, and this fine city of Geneva another Sparta, from which I will bear her off in triumph. By Heaven, I am so angered at her having given me all this trouble and uneasiness, that I could almost find it in my heart to hate her, but that love is too predominant."

"All in good time," said Urfort, with a sneer; "all in good time; hatred will come by and by, when love is cooled by the tears of the broken-hearted. Oh, it's mighty pretty to see how the fond fool will quote former times, and think that they ought to have lasted for ever."

"Tush! Tush!" cried the count; "these are reflections for Wahrend or the girl's maudlin brother."

"Apropos! That reminds me that you forgot to say a word about this young gentleman; so that when he made his appearance, I was somewhat puzzled to account for him. He seems, however, to have a curious mode of dealing with things, for I don't know whether his talk is like a red-hot poet or a mad Rosicrucian; he deals so in mysteries and rhapsodies."

"Let him not be mentioned," replied De Mara; "for his name almost throws a nausea on my heart: and after your intelligence of to-day I care as little for him as the new-found Swiss, whose appearance I now so well understand."

"But let me tell you, young Albert must be mentioned. To-day is not the first time that I have seen him."

"How?" interrupted the count.

"Manners, noble patron, manners, if you please; and do not interrupt a gentleman in the middle of his speech. Had you heard me to the end, you would have found that I meant to say that to-day is not the first time that I have seen the like of him; and from my observations of his sort of character I know that there is danger lurking under that mealy-mouthed countenance which seems as gentle as the new-born babe's."

"I cannot fear danger," cried the count, "when you tell me that Madeline is indisputably mine. Mine! Oh, there are a thousand worlds in that word! Already I can fancy myself encircling her fine and tapering waist with my arm, feeding on the honey that hangs on her pouting lips! Already——"

"Gently," cried Urfort, with an air of astonishment; do you really love the girl? for by your manner I positively declare that even I should be led to believe that you did."

"Do I love her! I love her better than any thing in the universe but—myself, my estate, and my next mistress."

"Oh, your servant, now we understand one another again. So let me repeat, Albert is the only danger I see to your success. As to Wahrend's own powers of persuasion, they are none; but let me tell you the brother

has taken up his cause; and though the girl has entered into the hot-bed of Cupid, it has not made her forget the more tranquil impulses of sisterly affection. Mark what I say—Albert is your rock a-head!"

"The viper!" exclaimed De Mara; "but, good Urfort, we must see and baffle this difficulty. Your face has vinegar enough in it, and it was with vinegar that Hannibal dissolved the rocks that led to Italy. Prithee, squeeze out some of the acetic juice that bides there on this rock a-head, and melt it into thin air."

"Your mention of vinegar reminds me of wine," cried the other, "and wine reminds me of my promised relaxation for the remainder of the day. To-morrow we will talk further of this business."

"But merely determine what shall be done with this Albert."

"To-morrow, noble patron, to-morrow. This day I dedicate to Bacchus. 'Fore Heaven! I can imagine the jolly god floats before mine eyes; and see what a frown he gives me, as if in reproach at my having so long deferred his orgies! What fine fellows those Italians are who swear by the 'Corpo di Bacco!' but how much finer the sturdy and phlegmatic Germans, who practise what the volatile Italians merely protest!"

"To remember what happened last night I should rather say that eating was your forte."

"Never judge a man by the first interview," cried Urfort; "last night was a necessary—this night shall be a luxury. In all honesty I can say that I always had a relish for drinking over eating: there is something so much more delicate and refined in its mode of operation; the honey liquor glides into the inner recesses of the whole frame with an insinuation quite bewitching."

"Why, Urfort," exclaimed the count, "you are quite poetical on the subject."

"If any thing," said the other, "could turn a man of sense into a mad-brain poet, it would be the charms of wine. Rough and rugged as I am now, my father was foolish enough to spend a pretty round sum on my education, and even now I can't quite forget the Latinity that was flogged into me at school. What is it some one has said of Homer?—

Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.*

And when I was but a youngster at the bottle, and thought it became me to mix each glass with a sentiment, my favourite quotation used to run, if my memory serves me, somewhat thus:—

Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,
And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse;
By making all one's spirits debonair,
Throws off the lees and sediment of care.—POMFRET.

"Nay," said the count, if you have quotation as well as argument to support you, I shall say no more. Only at least let me know where you are to be found in case of necessity."

"Don't you remember the black corks? As long as there is any wine under that seal, I and my host Kobolt shall be found hand-in-hand. But be merciful—nothing short of life or death can justify you in disturbing a drinking-bout."

And then, as if afraid of being further detained, he hurried out of the room to make the best of his way to the depository of the black corks and his favourite bottle.

* Homer, by his praise of liquor,
Proves he drained his cups the quicker

CHAPTER XXIV.

Penth. Who is the saint you serve?
Ithor. Friendship, or nearnees
Of birth, to any but my sister durst not
Have moved that question: as a secret, sister,
I dare not murmur to myself.—FORD'S BROKEN HEART.

FAITHFUL to his word, and no doubt deeply buried in the drinking joys for which he seemed to have imbibed so keen a relish, Urfort did not make his appearance at the count's hotel till the following morning. The nobleman had had some misgivings as to the condition in which he would present himself after a second night of deep and free carousing: but they all vanished on Urfort's appearance, for he looked fresh and hale; and those who had not been in the secret of his night-long debauch, would have little imagined that the period that had elapsed since he quitted De Mara's hotel had been spent in wine-bibbing rather than sleep, and that a hasty hour of slumber was all that he had allowed himself.

Urfort found De Mara still full of high hopes as to the speedy consummation of his scheme with respect to Madeline; but at the same time there was mixed with it more of caution and consideration than the first burst of assurance on the previous evening had allowed him to entertain. The interest which Albert had shown in favour of Wahrend having sunk deep into his mind, and remembering how nearly he himself had suffered for running counter to the youth's influence, he could not conceal from himself that the only way in which Wahrend's presence could have become formidable to his design, was by its being supported by the patronage and countenance of Madeline's brother.

It was with such reflections as these pressing through upon his mind, that he awaited the arrival of Urfort.

"You are well come," cried he, as soon as he perceived that his agent had entered the room, and was awaiting his further directions—"you are well come. And now to business. What further do you propose?"

"Nay, that is for your lordship to say. I was indulged with the black corks last night, and therefore cannot be less to day than all obedience in return."

"I am afraid," said De Mara, "that now that you drank so deeply and have slept so lightly, that you have not yet been able to awaken your brain to any effect. One word, however, will tell you which way I would have you turn your attention—Albert?"

"With all my heart," said the other; "I owe the lad a grudge, and I care not how soon the opportunity comes for striking a balance."

"Owe him a grudge—and for what?"

"Nay, noble patron," replied Urfort, with some slight hesitation, which, however, he contrived to gloss over by a sinister look, executed in his best dare-devil style—"nay, how can you ask that? Has he not crossed your path?—and is not that crossing mine? For till your way is made smooth, I am a hundred louis out of pocket. But what would you have me do with the stripling?"

"Do what you like with him!" said the count, hotly—"for I hate his very name. For any thing I care, you may take him to the top of a certain jetty that you wot of, and cast him into the lake!"

"Humph! I rather think the young gentleman might be in no humour

to trust himself there with me. Besides, where is the use of having a Machiavel like me for your agent, if it is mere brute force that is to be called into practice?"

"But my Machiavel, like he from whom you borrow the name, seems to be dead and beneath the sod."

"'*Resurgam!*' said the bravo. "Count twenty, noble patron, and you shall have a stratagem worthy of my *soubriquet*."

"Twenty!—there, suppose them counted" exclaimed De Mara; "and now for this notable device."

"You give but short shrift: but I think I have it. Albert is only feared because he is loved by his sister—am I right so far?"

"Ay," said the count, "but this only looks like begging time."

"Does this so also? Let Albert be set at loggerheads with his sister, and his influence ceases."

"That sounds well in words; but I know not whose skill shall be enough to accomplish such a point."

"I think I observed yesterday where there was room to hitch a quarrel between them; and at all events it will be worth the trial if it only serves to furbish my somewhat rusted talents of intrigue, so as to give them more insinuating readiness for the next attempt."

"Well, as you like," said De Mara, "but now our time is precious."

"I will about it instantly; but let me first understand how far I am to give an account of your actions to the lady. Are you to be in a complaining, or a resisting humour to-day?"

"To my fancy you had better leave me and my humours alone till you get the one thing you have undertaken fairly off your hands. It is a sad mistake of great geniuses to think they can never have enough to do at once."

"With all my heart!—the less to do the better; and therefore Master Albert shall claim all my attention to-day. It is but saying, if the girl press me on the subject, that I have not yet had time to sound M. Jacotot as to those quips and cranks of his present disposition."

"Good! let that be your cue to-day; and now away, for the maiden expects you, and the earlier you pay your visit there, the better your opportunity to fall in with Albert."

Urfort took the hint, and quitted the count's hotel for the abode of Madeline. He did not, however, stride along so eagerly as on the previous day, for he felt that the task he had to perform that morning was one of a much more difficult nature. In his first interview with Madeline he had only the general purpose in view of gaining her good-will and confidence without alarming her suspicions, or appearing to have too much cognisance of things beyond his sphere: but on this occasion he had a much more intricate affair on his hands for management—he had to insinuate a displeasure which Madeline had never yet felt, and to sow the seeds of unkindness where nothing but the tenderest affection and solicitude had hitherto taken root; and all this, as if to render the labour still more onerous, was to be done under the guise of a rustic simplicity that forbade his putting forth the real strength of his latent energies, and that forced him to trust to dark and apparently unintentional hints and suggestions, in the hope that Madeline's fruitful mind might adopt them, and give them the bearing and tendency for which they were purposed.

It was on this account that Urfort's step was less rapid, and his bound less elastic, as he made his way towards his second visit to the maiden. His had ever been a character prompt to act, and speedy in execution; but still, as the most adventurous sailor would shrink from daring ocean's peril without, at least, the compass to guide his doubtful ploughing of the deep, so Urfort felt that with all his audacity for the undertaking, it would be too

venturous even for *his* disposition to proceed without something like a chart laid down by which he might propose to steer. At present all was barren and vacant; and as the schoolboy minces his morning gait that he may have an opportunity of conning his ill-learnt task, so Urfort dallied with his pace that he might afford himself still further time to prick his imagination into something like a *point d'appui*, round which he might rally his surmises and suggestions. But even were such vantage-ground attained, what prospect was there that the arms he proposed to wield were sufficient to gain the victory? And here it was that what he had already apprehended of Madeline's character became of use; for he felt that had he to practise those distant hints on one of dull and unobservant impulse, his efforts would be in vain, and he should be compelled either to abandon that village simplicity which was his present guise, or the project itself which formed part of the motive why that simplicity had been assumed. But he had better hopes, from what he conceived to be Madeline's temperament of mind. She was vivid in apprehension, quick in arriving at conclusions, and, what was still better, seemed to have an active and sensitive disposition of thought, which was ever on the alert to conjure formations of its own out of the slightest materials afforded by others, and which took delight in magnifying, or rather in embodying and giving a substance to those things which were presented to her merely in embryo and obscurity.

For a considerable portion of the interval between the count's hotel and Madeline's apartments, the pace of Urfort was such as has been described: but on a sudden it broke into its wonted speed and lightness of step; and if the outward movements of man may be taken as indicative of the movements within, it might be inferred that some new light had crossed his mind, or that he had gained a footing whereon to build his operations, and that he once again found himself in a condition to face the victim, whose downfall was to be the criterion of his ingenuity in wickedness and mischief.

Madeline was expecting her treacherous ally; and when he entered the room she bestowed on him a smile, and almost sprang up from her seat to receive him, till the recollection of his menial condition sobered her in her place again, and taught her to establish a more cautious survey over her feelings.

"What news do you bring me of the count?" cried she.

"My master has not sent me with any message to-day," replied the other.

"But what is your own message, good Urfort? What have you yourself gathered towards the—the—understanding of yesterday?"

"Not much as yet, ma'm'selle, for M. Jacotot seemed to think me too simple to answer my questions in a straightforward way, though why he should have such notions is more than I can tell. I don't think I am half so simple as he, for he talks for an hour, and, when the hour is over, has said nothing after all."

"That is not amiss," said Madeline with a smile, "as a definition of simple conversation. But I should have thought you would have found a way of pressing him to the point."

"Why, I did not well know how to do that, for M. Jacotot has lived at Paris, and is as slippery as an eel. When I thought I had got him in a corner, he slipped off without as much as saying good-by, and left me to follow as well as I could."

"And so you came empty-handed?" cried the maiden in a disappointed tone.

"Not quite, Miss, for I bethought me of a famous scheme to get at the truth."

"Ah! what was that?"

"Why, as I found I could get nothing out of the man, I thought to myself I would try what I could get out of the master."

"Good Heaven!" cried Madeline, "surely you did not attempt any thing so foolish? He was sure to descry your object, and discovery would quickly follow."

"I took care to have no object, and so there was none for him to descry. All that I did was to answer his bell when he was at breakfast this morning, and when he saw me he began just in the place I wanted of his own accord."

"For the sake of mercy, tell me all that passed!"

"I don't think I can do that," said Urfort with a half grin, "for my lord talked a great deal: but I dare say I can remember some of it. In the first place, you must know that when I went back yesterday, M. Jacotot took your letter from me, and would not let me go in to the count myself, because, as he said, my lord was so angry at my delay. So when I went up to him this morning, he asked me how I came to be so long in bringing an answer; and I told him that you were interrupted from writing, first by Master Wahrend, and then by Master Albert."

"And what did he say about Wahrend?" eagerly inquired the girl.

"Oh, he said little enough about him, as if he scarcely seemed to like to mention his name, but he said a good deal about Master Albert."

"About Albert!" exclaimed Madeline; "I am afraid if it was only about him that he talked, that we are still as much in the dark as ever."

Urfort bit his lips, as he perceived the subject thus melting away, and Madeline's suspicions unaroused: "however," he added, "that was just why I said I had not gathered much as yet; but though the count laid all the blame on Master Albert, yet after what you said, I could not help thinking it was only a double of his, and that the real thing lay with Master Wahrend."

"De Mara blame Albert!" cried the orphan; "in what possible way could he do that?"

Urfort brightened again, as he continued: "Why, he said that there was something very mysterious about the young gentleman."

"Did he say that?" exclaimed Madeline; and then she half audibly muttered to herself, "true enough! true enough!"

Urfort watched the progress of his words, and was at hand to follow up the advantage he had gained. "I do not know that I ought to have said he blamed Master Albert, for all he said was that this mystery was something difficult to be handled, and it was unpleasant for a nobleman of rank, title, and estate, to have to encounter it."

"That is not unjust," thought the maiden.

"'But then,'" added he, "'no doubt, Mademoiselle Schvolen is fully aware what all this mystery means;—and yet no, for if she knew it, she has that pure feeling that she could not leave me in doubt on so sensitive a point.' And thus he seemed to be wavering backward and forward, and I could not help thinking what a pity it was that you were not there to set all right with a word."

"Alas, alas!" cried Madeline, almost unconsciously, "I have not the words with which to clear up his doubts, for my brother is no less ambiguous to me than to the rest of the world."

"Well, lady, I never should have thought of that; besides, who knows but his grand mystery might be of use to us in finding out my lord's disposition? My old father was always telling us never to throw away a straw, for even that might be of use to tickle a trout."

"Right, right," exclaimed the maiden; "and I will insist on a sister's right to know what is passing in his mind. It would be pity, now I am

acquainted with one of the points pressing on De Mara's mind, not to have it in my power at least to make that clear."

Urfort, delighted at finding that his suggestions had been received in the way his hopes would have dictated, took care, ere he went, to drop one or two further hints that might serve to fix Madeline's attentions the more notedly.

"Yes," said Madeline to herself, when left alone with none but her own busy imagination to bear her company—"yes, I will seek an explanation of this mystery from Albert. He has ever been next my heart, and he has no claim to conceal from me the strange career in which he has of late been running. De Mara says right: the best title that rank has to the respect of the world, is when it sets noble and praiseworthy examples to those who move in a humbler sphere; and I have therefore no right to expect that a nobleman and peer of France shall, for my sake, overlook what may be supposed by the world to cast a dimness on the lustre of his house, though Heaven and my heart know that dear Albert is as incapable of thinking or harbouring evil, as Mont Blanc's icy sides are of affording comfort to the adventurous mountaineer. I will seek my brother this instant: if need be, I will remind him of what we are to each other—I will tell him how affection should be another word for confidence—I will spread my own mind open before him, and he shall pour into it the strange and dark movings of his spirit, that have nearly made him forget humanity, as though he had a finer and more joy-bestowing world of his own in which to live."

It was with such thoughts as these leading her on to her purpose that she entered the bed-chamber of Albert. But he was not there. The room was in disorder, and had not that air of neatness which was characteristic of her brother's sober and decorous manner. It was long since she had been in his apartment, and she well remembered that when last there, her eye had, as usual, been struck by the air of decorum and order that reigned around, and was so characteristic of the well-organised habits of the youth. When, therefore, she saw how different was the aspect of the room on this occasion, it afforded her fresh proof of the entire change that had taken place in him whom she sought, and that something of real magnitude and impress must have effected the alteration. But another circumstance, trifling in itself, confirmed her still more strongly in this feeling. On his toilet-table stood a small box, which was so little closed, that the whole of its contents were exposed to her view. These contents were nothing but a simple locket, with a ribbon attached, for the owner to suspend from his neck. Oh, how well she knew that precious trinket!—that she did know it, that she prized it dearly, was evinced by the hundred fond kisses she bestowed upon it, as she took it from the box, and pressed it again and again to her heart and lips. That locket contained a single lock of her poor mother's hair—a lock that had been cut from her head when youth and happiness had left its glossy beauties unsullied, and before the pinching hand of carking misery had cramped its texture, and made grey its raven freshness. It had been found, after her death, among the few relics that she had left behind; and earnest had been the friendly contention between her, Seaton, and Albert, who had best title to its possession. At length, however, it had been yielded to the boy, in consideration of the heavy affliction with which nature had visited him, and in the hope that its possession might beguile some of the melancholy of his solitary hours. Dearly had he cherished it! Warily had he hung it round his neck! and if there was one thing in the world that he appeared to hold co-precious with the apple of his eye, it seemed to be this extant relic of his mother's person. With all these recollections rife in her mind, the finding it neglected and thrown aside, even for a moment, came over Madeline with a sort of shud-

der; and the remembrance of how Albert had looked and spoken when she was most deep in her grief and indignation at De Mara's conduct with Mademoiselle Basault, returned with renovated strength to her imagination, and threw a covering of secret dread and misgiving on the object for which she was seeking her brother. But it must be done! The task was imperative! and as she placed the priceless relic round her own neck, she resolved that obstacles should only strengthen her perseverance, and that difficulty should in like manner prompt her to more enduring resolution.

With her mind brought to this bearing, she anxiously awaited the arrival of her brother—not with that over-fed and unruly excitation of spirit that had been her "be all" on the night when she sought him for the purpose of making him the avenger of her offened love, but with a sober though full determination of so exhibiting the truth to his affection and his conscience, as to draw the mystery from the dark recesses in which he had hitherto appeared so eager so conceal it. But with all this honest strength of purpose to solace her, the hours waxed heavy to her expectation; and it was with a feeling of secret dread that she saw the night gathering around her without witnessing Albert's return. There was a mystic solemnity pervading what she already knew of her brother's movements, which had instilled a sensation of awe into her mind in spite of the resolution of her soul, and she could not help confessing to herself that she would rather have demanded this secret in the broad and open face of day than under the gloomy influence of the silent night. It was in the name of affection and every kind feeling of the human heart that she purposed to make this demand upon the secret store-house of her brother's soul; and affection swelled with joy at the cheering light of day, when all nature seemed to chime in harmony with its overflowing—affection shrunk with dismay from the sombre spirit of the night that conjured dark and troublous visions in answer to its honest voice.

At length he came. Midnight and he came together. Madeline heard his light and easy step as he ascended the stairs, and she almost trembled for a moment when she felt that the time was arrived for making this strange inquiry of an unwilling heart.

Another minute, and he was in the room. His eye, vivid and quick, seemed lighted with an elastic spirit from within, and his whole mien bespoke that mysterious satisfaction of heart, which she had noticed in him of late, and of which she was now to demand the reason.

"You are late, my Albert," cried she, willing, if possible, to establish some sort of foundation on which to built her inquiry.

"Late!" he replied; "it may be so! but I have almost forgotten how to count the hours:—when it is day, I love the day because it glitters with the sun, and makes the summer birds trill their heaven-taught lay: when it is night, I love the night, because it has silenced all things, and left me undisturbed to speak to my own soul; or if a sound be heard, it is the note of the love-sick nightingale that steals the senses away, to establish a still more exquisite one of its own production."

"But will you not sup now you are come?"

"My sister," returned the enthusiast, "I have supped."

"Where?"

"In the soft breeze of night—in the murmur of the splashing water—in the moon's light, that touches the trees, as they say the Fairies touch the sands, with gracious but ineffectual print. I have supped on the music of Heaven, and my soul is full."

"O Albert! what is this? Has your sister lost the link that bound you to her? There was a time when Madeline knew your heart, and when these things of which you speak, being enjoyed, were thought enhanced because she partook of them."

"The time that was," replied Albert, "is and shall be still. But in those days, though I gazed on the moon and watched the water's ripple, unkind nature had deafened me, and I heard not. Now my ears are full of sweet and moving sounds; and in my own estimation I am above the high potentate that commands a million million of miserable slaves."

"Albert," exclaimed Madeline, you have a secret at your heart—and I demand to know it."

As she spoke this, she rose from her seat, and placed herself before him with her full black eye fixed upon him, as though she would search the depths of his soul, and drag the mystery thence.

The youth started both at her words and manner. They seemed to have invaded a domain that he would have held inviolable to aught that had human shape, and he shrunk from the application. At length murmured he, "Well, be it so! say there is a secret. But let this be said too:—not a thousand tortures, more ingenious than a devil-minded man could invent, should wrest it from its hiding-place."

"I believe my brother," cried the girl with enthusiasm; "but shall not the voice of a sister who has loved as our mother bade her love, do that which no inflicted pain could accomplish? the traveller who laughed the fury of the wind to scorn, melted from before the warm embrace of Phœbus."

"Ask it not! ask it not!" cried the other orphan, "it is the ambrosial food of my soul—the mysterious sustenance of my brain. Take my life, but take not my more than life away."

"Oh, brother, how every word you utter urges me forward in the same direction, and bids me lay my claim at the door of your heart!"

"Then I will speak no more—yes, I will be dumb, as of old I was deaf. Leave me my darling mystery sacred and untouched, and I will in voluntary act shut myself from man's commune and talk only to my secret."

"Albert," cried the maiden, drawing from her bosom the deserted relic of her mother, "do you know this locket? Look on this fragment of our lost mother, and let your heart awaken to its pristine feelings. Can you not picture me her representative? Seaton was fond of saying my voice resembled hers. Oh, imagine that it is she who speaks! Believe that it is she who says—'Boy of my heart—of my earliest care and of my latest thought, speak to her who demands this pledge with that frankness which I bequeathed you with my blessing. Tell her the mysterious secret that threatens to sever two hearts, which, if disclosed, will be more indissolubly joined than chains of adamant could effect.'"

Albert melted into tears at this appeal to the memory of his mother: and when Madeline bade him listen to her voice as the type and semblance of hers, whose heart had ever commanded him, he looked as though some mighty contest of feeling occupied his soul, and was almost too much for human endurance to sustain.

"Oh that it should be thus!" he cried: "when music implanted the first seeds of this strange mystery in my brain, I thought that it was there to shed a perpetuity of happiness on my every moment. It was for this I fostered the growth: it was for this I shouted with high rapt joy on the night when my faculties, wound to a pitch that promised all or nothing, caught the last link that was wanting from your impassioned features, and made sure the fulfilment of the secret."

"Is it so? Then doubly have I claim to be partaker in its mysteries. For every reason am I authorized to urge my demand for knowledge:—for no reason are you entitled to withhold the tale that even now trembles on your lips, and that your honest heart yearns to pour forth into my ear. Do you doubt your sister, Albert?"

"Rather let me doubt all honesty and truth," cried the boy, passionately. "It is not you that I doubt, but myself. Oh, Madeline, I am not the crea-

ture that I was! and the spirit of her whom you have this night invoked, could she see the change, would doubt its knowledge of me. I was gentle, and of habits formed;—now, though I trust no ungentleness marks my course, my habits have passed into air—they are non-existent. I am a creature fitful in mood, and made up of strange and overwhelming thoughts, that feel their power, but find it of such vast and unwieldy nature that they know not how to exercise it."

"But though you are altered, I am the same," exclaimed Madeline: "has not my bosom ever been the depository of your heart, and has not my advice ever been your consolation and pride? Again I say, I am the same; then why not so with you? A moment past, I invoked the secret in your mother's name: I now invoke it in my own—in yours. Her dying mandate requires it, and our whole hope of happiness, peace, and affection, joins the requisition."

Albert was still in tears, and each word that his sister uttered seemed to reach his heart. At length he started from his seat, and as the maiden concluded those last words he rapidly paced the room.

Suddenly he paused.—"Sister, you have conquered," cried he in a solemn voice; "but you must promise—nay, you must swear that what I reveal shall be unuttered and unhinted by you to any mortal being that moves on this living earth."

Madeline had not expected such an adjuration, and she paused; for one of her undoubted objects in pressing for the disclosure was that she might be able to meet De Mara's exceptions on that point. Still, however, she feared that should she object to what Albert required, the opportunity would be for ever lost; and she was not without hopes that, once possessed of the secret, she might be able to alter her brother's determination in this particular; or, on the other hand, the disclosure might be of such a nature as that she, as well as Albert, should be eager to have it unwhispered to living creature.

These thoughts flitted across her mind, and she exclaimed, "My brother, I promise—I swear!"

"Nay, yet more," cried the youth: "there must be mutual confidence in all things between us."

"It shall be so," returned Madeline? "it shall be as though we had exchanged minds."

"Gracious Heaven!" energetically exclaimed the orphan, as he started as though he had trodden on some fearful object—"Gracious Heaven! have I already disclosed the secret!"

"My brother?—"

"Did you not say that we would exchange minds? Who bade you say that? Who told you that I had the power to do it? What spirit of darkness have you been dealing with to know that the great mystery I have buried deep in my breast, enables me to transfuse one man's mind into another's receptacle for that undefined and immaterial essence?"

"Albert, Albert, what is it you say?"

"What is it you say!" exclaimed he. "Is it all a phantom of this fevered brain? or did you not hint that my secret was discovered, and that you had learned that even I, ignorant and untutored as I am, have grasped one of the most hidden mysteries of nature, and discovered the SOUL'S TRANSFUSION?"

Madeline tottered from her brother to a seat—"Is it indeed so?" murmured she, scarce consciously—"can it be! may it be!"

"Ay," said the other, more soberly, but not less rapturously: "it can! it may! it is!—ask not where the secret lies! be content to know that I have it fast locked in the cells of my brain. The vast and incessant whirl that music's magic force instituted in my soul stirred me almost to madness.

Like Columbus, I knew that there was a new world awaiting my discovery, but, like him, too, I was driven desperately from sea to sea, and my whole faculty and power of perception was threatened shipwreck by the very thoughts that were hurrying me forward to the goal. But it came—at length it came. Like some sudden and momentary meteor it flashed in my mind's eye: I was dazzled with the glare, and well nigh overburdened by its magnitude; but, the first shock weathered, and the reality of the wondrous power that enlightened me recurred again and again, till my soul became accustomed to the conviction, and was capable of feeding on the unutterable thoughts that it begat."

"Can it be!" still murmured Madeline.

"I tell you—ay!—The world's vain fools will cry 'fie' upon it, and the wise in their own estimation will talk of 'out of nature;' but all their babble cannot eradicate the fact, which is ever present here. What got Socrates for his wisdom?—He was condemned to death as a dangerous innovator. What Galileo?—He incurred the lash of the inquisitor for making the sun the centre of his system and of truth. What Columbus?—He was laughed at as a visionary, till he laid his finger on America, and said, 'Here is my answer.' Why then should I not be called visionary, and be subjected to persecution? Welcome, welcome either, both, or any thing, as long as I can lay my finger on my forehead and say, 'Her stands the man that possesses the secret of the soul's transfusion—that can change his own mind with that of any other—or can pour that which is one man's brain into another's and reverse the operation as long as life endures.'"

CHAPTER XXV.

Here hope began to dawn: resolved to try,
She fixed on this her utmost remedy.—DRYDEN.

THIS, then, was the solution of the strange mysteriousness that had overhung Albert's career from almost the very day of his being made perfect in the attributes and faculties of his kind. In the knowledge of this vast and incomprehensible power lay the secret of his joyous looks, his bewildered gait, and his delighted and almost preternatural demeanour, by which he had given token of being, as it were, abstracted from the grosser particles of this world, and cased in a machinery that outdid mere human apprehension.

But if he had evinced such unaccustomed signs of the discovery with which his mind had grappled, still more was Madeline moved by all the shows and properties of astonishment, when in the affection of his heart (to whose sovereignty he was still mortal enough to bow) he disclosed the secret which till that moment he had hugged so engrossingly within his own bosom. The brother's mind had, to a certain extent, been prepared for the possession of so unheard-of a mystery by the very facts that had led him to one feature of it after another, till the whole was made manifest to his soul:—but with the sister there had been no such marshalling of the way; she had wandered on in utter darkness till the moment of Albert's enthusiastic burst, which bore the secret, open and unreserved, on its surface; and when its knowledge was thus betrayed, and every cellule of her brain was filled, the change from dark to light—from all that was obscure to all that was elucidate—was so sudden, swift, and overwhelming, that her speech seemed to be snatched from her, and the whole constitution of her mind appeared to stagger under the immensity of the burthen,

which had thus in an instant been thrown upon it, unmoulded and unforewarned.

When Albert finished the words with which the last chapter concluded, a cold and heavy perspiration stood upon his brow, and he felt as one who has overstretched the natural power of his frame, and who, in proportion to the too much exertion he has undergone, sinks into too much weakness. The secret was declared—the mystery was clarified—and with slow and unsteady pace he sought the solitude of his own chamber, to mourn over the infracted unity of his precious discovery.

Madeline remained alone in person, but the words of her brother had afforded her a companionship of deep and inexpressible interest. Once—and once only—she asked herself the question—"Can this be a wild chimera?—something as inexistent and unreal as the fabled monsters of mythology, or the pretended secrets of the dark ages?" But the habit of a young and ardent girl is not that of scepticism; and when she remembered the fire with which the words were spoken, the earnestness of soul that streamed from the narrator's eyes, the moment of doubt was dismissed—for ever dismissed from her contemplation. It only wanted this to assure her in her thoughts that were fast rising in her mind—thoughts of wonderful contexture, and that filled her with the same living stream of delight that had already flowed so often and so bountifully through the soul of Albert.

The next morning found her bathed in the same fountain of pleasure, but it gradually began to wear a more practical appearance. The question came to her mind—"Is it not possible to make this strange discovery applicable to the same business in which Urfort is now being employed?" and an affirmative answer irresistibly offered itself to her busy imagination. Attending to the present impulse of her mind, all that she cared about in the whole circle of human events was to ascertain beyond doubt the real tenor of the Count de Mara's feelings towards her. It was for this that she had dared the adventurous hazard of employing one of the count's own dependents, at whose mercy she was every moment lying, and whose betrayal of her secret would necessarily tend to lower her in the estimation of him whose good opinion was more valuable to her feelings than all her earthly hopes. But how safe and how easy in the comparison was the aid that could be afforded by the employment of this mysterious agency, which was within the grasp of Albert's power! Urfort's assistance, even supposing him to be honest, and all danger on that score to be nugatory, was uncertain, and might turn out profitless, while now, on the other hand, there was offered, ready to her use, a means by which she could with mathematical precision ascertain the minutest turn of thought of which the nobleman was possessed.

Why, then, should she hesitate which of the two to adopt? Yet still hesitation there was; for she could not without an effort bring her mind to the resolution of employing so strange and unaccustomed an instrument, even to a purpose that seemed to have taken up its everlasting abode in her heart. However much it may be within human nature to love the mysterious, it is equally its characteristic to shrink from the individual exercise of it. A story of the marvellous and preternatural, employed by another, bears along with it an irresistible excitation; but, when the spirit is called on to launch itself into the unfathomable ocean, where human knowledge has never entered, and of which human experience can give no account, it involuntarily shudders at the thought of such a task, and feels cowed at the wild obscurity of the enterprise. Thus it was with Madeline. The ardent flow of words with which her brother had described the gigantic faith which she was called upon to receive, had made her bosom heave high with nervous rapture; but when the idea of herself first undertaking the peril of practically elucidating what as yet presented itself only

as a beauteous theory to her imagination, was forced upon her mind by the tempting prospect of discovering beyond doubt, and beyond denial, the actual current of thought that ran through De Mara's soul, her heart acknowledged a tremor, which even the single empire of the impulse that was upon her was unable altogether to subdue. All eager, and all zealous as she was, she hesitated—for the first time in her life she hesitated. Hitherto we have seen how the vehemence of her spirit caused her instantly to leap to the execution that was proposed, without giving one moment's consideration to what might follow. It was this that had involved her in a quarrel with her uncle;—it was this that had made her so harshly dismiss Wahrend at the cottage-door, and so unjustifiably feed him with hopes on his re-appearance at Geneva;—it was this that had made her so heedlessly avail herself of Urfort's services in the prosecution of her design upon the count. But this time she hesitated. And why? It was not a looking forward to the consequences;—it was not a weighing or a balancing of the advantages to be derived against the ill that might possibly accrue. No;—it was, that her mind, powerful, ardent, romantic, and headlong as it was, could not all at once muster the great and last stretch of resolution which that human being must have who shall dare to overstep the seemingly prescribed bounds of nature, and enter on a world unknown, undefined, and uninvestigated.

Thus, for awhile, she doubted. Thus, things of another world held her in suspense; but in proportion as they were obscure and indefinite, they allowed her thoughts to range, and give them what aspect they would. In the meanwhile her disposition was stationary; and while her bouyant fancy enabled her gradually to abstract what was gloomy and threatening in the picture of which Albert had been the original inventor, (though she was the composer and filler up of the canvass,) her eager spirit, ever at work and on the alert, was urging her forward to the undertaking.

It was resolved. The last faint clouds of doubtful agitation were dispelled by the brightness of her hope; and the sky seemed clear and promising to her expectant heart. Yes, the soul of De Mara should be probed by the infallible and mysterious test, which, through Albert, she had within her control; and the puny and underling assistance of her former coadjutor should be foregone, as insignificant, and even ridiculous, when compared with the mighty touchstone she was about to wield.

Scarcely was this important resolution concluded in her mind, when Urfort entered. He was an unwelcome visiter, for he reminded her of a rash step that she had adopted, and for which, now that this change in her power had taken place, there was not even the apology of utility to offer. When, therefore, she perceived his entry, the first impression of her mind was to get rid of him as rapidly as she could, in order that she might, if possible, get rid of the reminiscence to which his presence gave rise, and abandon herself to the pure, unshackled speculations which the knowledge of Albert's secret infused into her imagination.

"Do you bring any message from the count?" demanded she, in reply to his rustic bow.

"No, my lady," answered the man; "it was at your bidding—not at my lord's, that I came this morning. I thought that perhaps, though I had not much to say, I might as well run here to tell that little while he was dressing."

"Not to-day!—not to-day!—Never mind for the present!"—returned Madeline, in a hasty manner;—"but—but—perhaps you may have heard the count say what his intentions for the day are?"

"I know that he said to the Chevalier Altoz, who breakfasted with him, that he hardly knew what his intentions were, for the unpleasant reflections which the conduct of Master Albert—"

"How dare he throw blame on conduct so unimpeachable?" interrupted the girl, with vehemence in her manner: "the conduct of Albert may be too lofty for comprehension, but I vouch its admirable excellence."

Urfort knew not how to reconcile this speech with her spontaneous admission at their last interview, that there was something in her brother's behaviour that required explanation; but at all events it served to put him on his guard, and he proceeded cautiously—"Nay, Ma'm'selle, I do but repeat what I heard said while I waited at the breakfast-table; but perhaps I had better not tell what the chevalier replied to my lord's complaint."

"Yes, yes," answered she, "let me hear all, if it leads to any conclusion as to when I may see De Mara. I well know Altoz is no friend of mine; and therefore *his* remarks cannot wound me."

"I am glad you know that, for I thought it very ill-natured of him when he said that the best thing my master could do, was to give up the matter altogether; and then he laughed and said, 'Do but pay a visit to Madrid, and I will answer for your finding beauties enough there to make up for your loss here.'"

"And the count—the count—what said he?—Quick, on your life tell me every syllable he uttered in reply!"

"That's just what I am not able to tell you, Miss," said the other, warily pausing in the right place, "for at that moment I was sent down stairs for some *bon-bons*, and when I returned with them, I found the chevalier had risen to take his leave."

"My good fellow," said Madeline, after a minute's pause, during which she seemed to be taking counsel of her thoughts, "I can now tell you the whole service that I require at your hands. It amounts to this—that I should have an interview with your master without fear of interruption."

"I am sure you need only write to the count for that."

"Nay, nay, that will not do. When I say 'without fear of interruption,' I—I—mean that even he himself must not have the power to interrupt me. You seem not to understand me; yet it is plain enough. Cannot you contrive that I—and perhaps my brother—should have admission to him when he is taking his *siesta* after dinner? Introduce me to him as he sleeps."

"My lady!" exclaimed the seeming menial.

"I mean no harm, good Urfort," cried the orphan, scanning the astonished countenance of her listener;—"I mean good to all. On the faith of Heaven, nought else!—Assist me then in this, and your task shall be at an end, to be rewarded to the utmost of my ability."

"I do not doubt your intention, of course, lady, for I am sure that never would you do any thing to bring a poor fellow into trouble. But how is this to be done? There are a thousand things to prevent it—none to assist it."

"Be it your care to employ Jacotot, and the rest will be easy."

"But supposing my lord should awake while you are in the room?"

"That can easily be prevented by an opiate, which you may mix in his wine when you help him during the dinner-service."

"Well, my lady, I can't but say that I am afraid of the job. But I should be sorry to let my cowardice stand in the way of your happiness and my lord's; and I am sure that you would not attempt any thing that did not mean that."

"Right, right!" cried Madeline, enthusiastically: "the angels be my witness that I seek nought else—that I pray for nought else."

"Then I will see what I can do:—perhaps it may happen, now that I wait so much upon his lordship, that Monsieur Jacotot may get a holiday, and then the coast will be clear."

"If so, the better. But the thing must be done immediately: to-day, it is too late, I fear; but to-morrow—yes, to-morrow—suspense and I must shake hands for ever."

"To-morrow, lady! Well, I can but try; and at all events you shall see me in the morning to know how for I have succeeded."

Urfort was too happy to be released not to take the first opportunity of making his escape; and he was too full of the strange and unaccountable variation in Madeline's demeanor not to hurry to the count's hotel, and lay before him a statement of what he was able to describe, but not to explain.

"By Janus and all his double-faced posterity! continued he, after narrating to the astonished De Mara the conversation which had taken place between himself and the maiden—"the girl has this time fairly won my heart, and I should be proud to be the father of such a piece of fear-nothing resolution. It did my whole spirit good to watch her manner, and observe how she made a proposition, the bare mention of which would send nine-tenths of her sex into hysterics, with a coolness that would have been creditable to our Fifth Harry at Agincourt, when he turned out his handful of brave souls against I know not how many thousands of your countrymen. But what the devil does it all mean? There's the beauty of it. It is as pleasant as a conundrum over a sea-coal Christmas fire;—and for myself, I intend to allow a whole week to find out the riddle of it."

"I hope not," said the count; "for every thing I hear about the maiden serves to show me that there is not a moment to be lost; and I think it would be as well, if you would look at the thing in the same light, or your second hundred louis are likely to remain in the mines of Peru."

"But what think you, most excellent patron, is the meaning of this new freak of her fancy?"

"Psha! I think it means nothing, and that it is as you say, merely a new freak of her fancy. We have no time to trouble our heads about the whims of a romantic girl: she must be carried, Master Urfort—she must be carried; for I am well-nigh tired of this see-saw of do-nothing, and am determined that this next week, which you so judiciously proposed dedicating to the discovery of this childish enigma, shall make her mine."

"Nay, I never intended wasting a minute of real business-time on such a pursuit, but only meant that I would keep it by me to give a relish to my visit to Kobolt's black corks when each day's work is over. And now what would your lordship have me do?"

"In the first place a thorough negative must be put on this ridiculous crotchet in which she would have employed you; and in the next I would have you follow up the project in which you took Altoz's name *not* in vain, as I hope. Let her be brought to imagine that I am on the eve of bidding farewell to her and Geneva, and the thing must come to a crisis."

This plan seemed to coincide with Urfort's views, and the two worthies occupied themselves in discussing its various bearings, in order that the latter, in his next interview with the orphan, might be prepared to drop such hints as should hurry her on to action, without affording her any period for deliberation. The peculiar vocation to which De Mara had devoted himself since he had felt the force of woman's charms, enabled him to suggest almost every possible contingency or difficulty that might arise; nor did his assistant display less knowledge, though on a broader and more unrefined scale, in the same untwisting and making simple the knots of intrigue; so that, before they separated, Urfort felt himself more entirely master of his position than he had hitherto been, and the count gave him his *congé* for the night, in the full assurance that enough was arranged to impel Madeline irresistibly forward into the snare that was prepared for her entrapment.

In the mean time Madeline, having formed her resolution, and having also, as she thought, smoothed the way for its successful accomplishment, waited with impatience for the arrival of her brother, that she might apprise him of the manner in which she designed to make this first use of his arca-

num. But though she had to wait for his coming, the intervening time she did not deem ill employed in pourtraying to her fanciful spirit the various ways in which the service of this potent agent would give her the mastery over De Mara; and when she remembered the ungentle advice which Altoz had proffered in temptation of her lover's loyalty, ten-fold and twenty-fold did she rejoice that she was possessed of the wherewithal to balance so invidious a makeweight, and hold up a mirror in which the exact line and boundary of the chevalier's influence should be reflected to a nicety.

With these feelings deep-seated in her bosom, and her soul alive with all the eagerness of an end to be accomplised, her meeting with Albert that night seemed to presage auspiciously, and give pleasant note of preparation forerunning her success. That her brother would consent to her proposition she had not for a moment doubted; and when, instead of seeking his own chamber with stealthy pace, he came directly into the apartment where she was in the habit of sitting, and appeared before her with cheerful face and a light heart painted in his countenance, she hailed these signs as excellent omens of her suggestion being received by him with the same unity of sentiment that it had afforded to her own heart.

"Madeline," said the enthusiast, as he placed himself by her side, "I am but a wayward creature; and yet I trust that the end will show that the purpose of my mind is faithful, and that I am about to acknowledge no principle which has not honesty of intention for its beginning and its finish."

"What means my brother?"

"I mean," replied Albert, "an apology to my sister for what may have appeared strange, but was not intended so. When the mystery, of which you last night witnessed the explication, was hanging over my faculties in all the darksome grandeur of obscurity—or when it burst forth on that night when your wild and uncontrolled expression of features lent it a flame by which its beacon-piles, wanting only that, were set a-blaze—was it wonder, was it marvel that the young and unformed mind of a scarcely more than boy should be bewildered in the vast labyrinths that such a subject at once threw open to his consideration? And when last night your searching and heart-wringing words tore the secret from the receptacle in which I fondly hoped that it was for ever buried, was it a matter of surprise that I should mourn over the lost singleness of my knowledge? Let this, Madeline, be the key to what is passed; and since it is destined that in the details of this wonderful unhinging of the door that Nature has established for the soul of man, we are to go hand in hand, from this moment let my chary and abstemious eagerness to have the secret all my own be forgotten between us, that we may with the more real and lasting enjoyment, whisper to each other the wild thoughts that our joint knowledge will originate! Let the unsharing dream of my youthful blood be forgiven! Let my uncouth demeanour, my solitary wanderings, my unwise avoidance of the open confidence of a sister's heart be forgiven and forgotten! Henceforth we will be one, single and indissoluble, even as though we had practised this great mystery on ourselves, and each had received the other's soul transfused. Excuse these many words, my sister—accept them in apology of my past silence—and let the Orphans of Unwalden hereafter live, as they were bidden in those last and touching sentences of our uncle's letter."

Madeline listened to her brother's address with the profoundest attention: each word that dropped from his lips made her heart more and more glad, for she saw in them, as she thought, the free pledges and forerunners of his acceptation of the proposition she was about to make.

But he ceased; and she replied, "Enough, and too much, my brother. In all that you have described I recognise but the simple dictates of nature, and cannot feel that I have a right to utter one word of reproach;—most sure I am that I have no inclination to do so. It was not till last night that

the true test of your heart's affection was applied; and believe me I feel not only satisfied, but grateful at the result."

"My own sister," exclaimed the youth, "I had but to explain the truth to receive her heart. That which I have said, therefore, was rather in acquittance of my own conscience, than in doubt of your feeling: but it is past—never to be revived. And now, what of this strange mystery that I grasp?"

Do you think you can bear to talk of it fully and freely?"

"It is to that that I have been tutoring my mind. I shall not be surprised if at first it shrinks from the touch of another person's thoughts:—but you know all; and will therefore understand how to make allowance, should it involuntarily shudder. If I have been able to probe my own feelings, it will come upon me as when the first chords of music penetrated my ear: it was a sweet pain, a thrilling agony; but the first assault endured, the suffering gave way, and delight and ecstacy alone remained."

"So it shall be here," cried Madeline, if the kind voice of affection may do as much. Let us put it to the proof on the instant, and teach one another the inestimable value of the gift you have bestowed on me."

"That has been the chief thought with which I have fed my soul from the first moment of the discovery. The idea of how many minds I would peruse—how many actions I would scan by their true touchstone, the brain—how many magnificent movements of the soul I would enjoy—came over me like some vast fairy vision of delight, and my whole imagination was in a state of rapture. Teach me how to improve this, my sister, and I will worship you."

"At least I can counsel you to make what is now only imaginary, a reality and a fact. I would have you throw aside the mere ebullitions of your fancy, fevered as it is by the excitement of this strange business, and ascertain in good earnest of what stuff this mystery is made."

"What would you have me do?"

"I would have you say, 'Let this thing be.' I do not ask the process by which you may accomplish it. I will not seek to examine too deeply the chain which enables you to hold the more essential part of man under dominion, and to transgress the ordinary laws of nature; I only desire to witness its practical effects—to feel its actual operation."

"Ask it not yet," exclaimed the youth—"ask it not yet! Do not think that I am wanting in moral courage when I confess, that at the contemplation of making this principle effective, my whole nature seems reluctant to the task. I know that I have the power;—I feel it mighty within my breast; but some sensation, unutterable and undefinable, seizes on my mind when I say to myself, 'The time is come: I will prove this mystery.'"

"There is no matter for surprise in this" returned Madeline; "but that which you feel is but a morbid shrinking from the necessity that there will be to string your whole soul to the whole labour. I can well imagine that to do this requires an effort; but it is an effort that must be undertaken, and the longer you allow yourself to linger on the borders, the more irresistibly will this feeling take possession of your mind."

"You have in part described," said the other orphan, "whence arises this emotion; but you have not yet arrived at the more impressive feature that holds me back. My secret is my mistress—my bride! I am wedded to it, heart and soul; I have endowed it with my richest and most worthy thoughts; and it is because I have done this that I shrink from holding it up to the glare of day, and challenging the gaze of the world's folly, or the world's wisdom. It is the chosen of my heart, and I cannot endure that it should be public to the examination of all who please to pass their comments on it."

"I do not think," replied the maiden, "that this is a different feature, but a

portion of the same. Once summon the energy to make the mystery practical, and you will find that both will disappear at the exercise of the one effort."

"But will the practice reward me for its use? The world is not so full of excellence as I thought it on the day that Valdi gave me my hearing. I walked abroad, and heard a hapless female, whose face alone bespoke the deepness of her want, ask alms, for pity's sake, of a trim and gallant master; and while I could have wept at the accent of her voice as she spoke of 'pity,' he whom she addressed stalked on, with his head high in air, as if he heard her not: and then I pitied him, for I thought that this well-dressed walker had, like me, been born deaf, and never met with a Valdi to give him the blessing that Nature had denied;—but he was not deaf, for presently he met a friend, and they chatted and laughed, while still the poor creature stood at hand, and made my ears ache at her tremulous tones. This was my first lesson in the world's ways, but it has not been my last; and again and again I tremble lest a particle of my priceless secret should be whispered in such callous and unhallowed ears."

"This is going into the other extreme," observed Madeline; "for it does not necessarily follow, that, because you so far unlock the mystery, as to make it practical in one instance, all the world will be informed of its existence. Let me be the subject on whom you operate—you shall not find me tremble or shrink; and when the experiment is over, and I am restored to the original action of my own mind, whom safer could you have to investigate as to the effects that so wonderful a transfusion must induce?"

"Perhaps it may be so," replied the brother; "but at least let me have further time for its consideration."

"No, Albert, no; it is from that which I wish to drive you. Why should you pause when you grasp the power, and when I am ready and willing to be the instrument?—We must on—we must on, for my soul is on fire to enter on such unknown regions, and to be able to canvass the hidden secrets of its neighbour. I scarce know the mysteries of my own brain;—then how strange and wonderful will it be to enter upon those of another—take possession of the contents that till then lay fast locked within, and peruse in distinct character all that nature and disposition has there inscribed!"

Albert's eyes kindled as his sister described a portion of those thoughts which had so long and so fully occupied his own brain; and catching an equal ardour with her own he exclaimed, "It shall be! it shall be!" Then again he wavered, as if still unable to conquer the aversion that he had to rob his mind of the abstract theory that possessed it; and he continued in a tone more subdued—"But you forget, my sister; there must be a second party to this proceeding. Where are we to find one whom we may trust, and who will be willing to undergo the experiment?"

"I have already foreseen that question," replied Madeline, who was delighted at the prospect of having her scheme against the count crowned with success—"I have already foreseen that question, and have made my choice."

Albert looked at her uneasily as he exclaimed, "The name! The name!"

"The count De Mara," replied the sister resolutely.

"No, no," cried the other, "never will I consent to such a selection. What! put my dear, my precious secret, that lies in my heart and excludes all other thoughts, in the power of De Mara! Rather would I foreswear its ecstacy and raptures for ever! Rather would I banish it henceforth from my mind! Rather would I be again made deaf and unconscious of the more excellent delights of which hearing only can partake!"

"But you have not heard the whole of my plan," said Madeline; "like yourself, I feel so envious of the secret, that I would not have it whispered

to another living being. I have not therefore proposed that De Mara should be its participator, but that he should be the unconscious instrument."

"Unconscious instrument!"

"Yes; we will steal upon him when he sleeps. Let transfusion then take place; and how is it possible that he will know what has happened? At the worst, he will but wake in the fancy that he has had some wild and incoherent dream; and the real solution of the mystery will for ever remain hidden from him."

"I like it not," replied the brother, "nor can I in any way bring my mind to contemplate De Mara's having any share whatever in the matter. He has ever been too wise and cunning for both of us; and if I do not hate him, at least I fear him, and will never put what is more precious than life itself within the possibility of his reach."

"But every thing is prepared for the plan I have proposed," exclaimed the maiden.

"Heaven and earth!" cried the other with emotion, "surely he knows nothing yet! Surely not one syllable has been breathed by which he can trace my power! Oh, Madeline, I had hoped that when he so deeply injured you, and gave you proof how he could wantonly neglect and even torture you, that he had sown that within your bosom which could not so easily be forgiven."

"I have not forgiven him," cried the girl; "and it is because I have not that I make this proposition. Besides the soul-stirring wish that I have to trace this mystery to the very uttermost, I would penetrate by its means the hidden cogitations of De Mara's bosom, for it is by that alone that I can learn how to deal with him."

"Leave him and his cogitations alone, my sister; and deal with him only through the medium of a silent contempt. On this, too, rely; the more you come in contact with him, the more he will gain mastery over you—and your only safeguard, therefore, is his avoidance."

"It cannot be," exclaimed Madeline; "I have bound myself to the labour of meeting his endeavours; and it must be done. I now call on you to assist me in this attempt with your mighty and mysterious power; I demand your aid as your sister and the sharer in your secret."

"No, no, no!" returned Albert hastily: "on De Mara my discovery shall never be practised. Each day I sicken more and more at the very mention of his name; and no power on earth shall bring me to make the experiment that you require at my hands."

"Be not rash, Albert," cried his sister; "you cannot doubt my affection or my love:—let me not then have occasion to doubt yours. Exercise your power as I would have it, or cast me off at once: I know no medium; nor can I understand those nicer distinctions of feeling that lead you to refuse, and to couple with so cruel a refusal a pretence of kind-heartedness which cannot in such company be really entertained."

"Are these words to me?" exclaimed the brother; "and dare you doubt my affection? Do you remember last night? Do you remember how I tore in pieces the web that my fancy had woven around my discovery for the purpose of admitting you within its precincts? Do you remember but ten minutes ago, when I gave up the sanctity and fine abstraction of my secret in obedience to your prayer to make it practical and effective? And after this, can you—dare you doubt my affection?"

"Prove its entireness by yielding this last point; or let me have none of it."

"You have my answer," cried Albert; "never shall De Mara be instrumental to the developement of transfusion."

"Then never will Madeline have faith in such half-love and affection. Rather would she wander, alone and unbrothered, over the surface of the

globe! Rather would she penetrate the entanglements of some unexplored forests, till she arrived where man's foot never yet trod, frightening the solitude of unnumbered ages with her exclamations, 'I have no brother!—I have no friend!' Albert, farewell!" and with disappointment in her manner, and anger deep-seated on her brow, she quitted the room.

The youth looked after her with astonishment. He would have stopped her; but he knew not with what words, or with what comfort. To risk the possibility of De Mara being a sharer in his discovery, his every feeling forbade:—to persuade his sister under the present vehement impulse of her spirit to give up the proposition, was hopeless and not to be entertained. Albert, therefore, though he would have stopped her, could not: all he might do was to watch her hasty but deep-resolved steps; and as she closed the door he felt his heart sink within him. It was not in his nature to refuse any thing to Madeline; and though a firm and thorough conviction informed him that in being thus determined he had adopted the more judicious course, he felt as if his conscience half reproached him for having so perseveringly withstood her prayer. What had passed was a sad and grievous prelude to the all-relying confidence which but half an hour before he had been proposing to his sister; and though he stole forth again to seek his late prized solitude, he could not help doubting whether he should now reap from it that single and entire enjoyment, which for the last month it had bestowed on his delighted feelings.

CHAPTER XXVI.

So ready to be gone! Barbarian, stay!
He's gone, and love returns and pride gives way.
Oh, stay! Come back!—GRANVILLE.

THE next morning Madeline found the usual hour of Urfort's daily visit fast approaching, but she knew not how to receive him. He would come with hopeful words on his lips to give her to understand that the train was laid to secure her secret visit to the count's apartments, while she who was the chief plotter and mover of the scheme was unprepared and unable to make use of the opportunity that would be brought to her very hands.

And why was it that she had failed in the attempt? Angry as she was with her brother, her candour, however distorted by the influence of displeasure, would not allow her to deny his general kindliness of nature;—and yet she had failed in the most important request she had ever urged upon his heart. Why was this?—Either she must have asked that which it was even beyond Albert's affection to grant, or she must have pressed it upon him on grounds that failed in making the requisite impression on his mind. The first of these alternatives she would not—could not—admit; for so necessary did her request still appear to her to be for the well-being of her connexion with De Mara, that her whole impulse and feeling forbade the confession that she had gone beyond the boundary of what she might demand or her brother might grant. The second seemed more admissible, for her conscience could not deny that she had put before Albert for his consideration a motive—not the true one. Why should she have disguised the fact? Why should she not have told the real state of her heart, and have confessed that with all De Mara's slights and neglect, she loved him still? It was true that no human being cares to stand convicted on self-confession of a weakness or a want of sustaining the proper dignity of their person; but, on the other hand, had she described to her brother the perturbed and wretched state in which her whole faculties were placed by the harassing

suspense in which the nobleman had kept her for the last week, the rebuff she had received at his hands would have been spared; and at that very moment when she was deploring the failure of her enterprise, they would probably have been deep in council together for the furtherance of an object, which would bring the genuine condition of her lover's professions within her knowledge and comprehension.

What then was there which prevented her adopting, though late, this straightforward policy with her brother, and relying on the kindness of his heart to confirm what the yearning of her spirit demanded? One circumstance, and one alone, seemed to stand in the way of such a measure. Her behaviour to Wahrend in his presence, since the renewal of their conviction, had undoubtedly been such as to lead her brother to believe that he had always been entitled to a favourable position in her bosom: she had been able to perceive in Albert's manner towards the Swiss a sort of self-gratulation that he had stepped in to put the pretentions of the nobleman to flight; and the conscience of Madeline could not help admitting that so far from intervening to correct this error of her brother's apprehension, she had rather fed the mistake by at once admitting Wahrend to all his former privileges of acquaintanceship, and by again inducing him to confess the passion which he had first learned to entertain for her at Unwalden. With what face, then, would she be able to confess to her brother that her affections were irrevocably bestowed upon the count, when she well knew that her conduct towards the Swiss had strongly impregnated the youth's mind with the hope that his old friend was to be the successful candidate for her favour? and how could she throw herself upon his fraternal bounty, when the first word he would have to utter in reply, would be a reproach for the ungenerous deception she had exercised towards himself, and the most cruel hopes with which she had nurtured his friend's pretensions? It was true that the manner in which she had given Wahrend his *congé* on the morning of her first interview with Urfort, as well as that in which she had received Albert's intercession in his behalf, might have somewhat shaken the faith of the latter as to the certain success of the former; but, nevertheless, she could not flatter herself that Albert had really arrived at the motive which had induced her to lend a willing ear to the revival of Wahrend's tale of love.

But still, with all this heavy account against her, might she not hope for her brother's succour when she should lay before him a candid display of the errors and impulses of her heart? To defend the encouragement that she had been giving to the Swiss was impossible—to palliate was perhaps hardly within her power:—but at all events she could present it with the misgivings and reproaches of a contrite heart to Albert's notice; she could herself be the first to condemn what no human subtlety could justify; and the error committed, she could repent, like her first mother, and exclaim—

> "Bereave me not,
> Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
> Thy counsel, in this uttermost distress,
> My only strength and stay; forlorn of thee,
> Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?"

The false step that she had made was a grievous one: but, though late, she might retrieve it to a certain extent, and, casting around her the mantle of contrition, hope to conceal the deformity that she had vlountarily assumed under the dominion of her hasty temperament.

But the essence of repentance lies in deeds, not words. What would Albert require at her hands in proof of the earnestness of her sorrowing; and could she not by forerunning that requisition present to him the best evidence of her sincerity?—Wahrend had been most unfairly dealt with. It

would be mainly on his behalf that her brother could complain. Through Wahrend therefore must emanate the peace-offering which she would proffer to her brother. But how might this be accomplished? Affection she could not tender to the Swiss; for it was the mighty predominance of that feeling towards De Mara that was urging her to the humiliations which she proposed, but to which her high spirit could hardly stoop, though her conscience insisted on their justice, and her judgment was decisive in favour of their wisdom. Wahrend, however, had a noble and undeviating candour of mind:—from his lips reproach had never come, when in the injustice of her anger she had, on quitting Unwalden, forbade him her presence; and in the whole of his intercourse with her he had shown that a manly straightforwardness of demeanour, joined to a simple but earnest desire to deserve well of her, had been the motive and principle upon which his character was grounded. Why, then, should she not make the same confession to him, that a minute before she had resolved to make to Albert? Why should she not tell him that her heart was unable to love—that her soul was bleeding for the unkind deceit she had practised—but that to show she was not utterly unworthy, she had at least honesty enough left to throw herself upon his generosity, to implore his forgiveness, and even to hope, in bidding him farewell for ever, he might endeavour to forget the past in the tardy justice that had brought her to this confession?—She would do this!—She would make this painful but just avowal of her fault to the honest-hearted Swiss, who, in meeting the candour of her bosom by a more than equal candour in his own, would become the best and most effectual surety that she could offer to Albert in earnest of the sincerity of her feelings.

Her mind having adopted this resolution, she was better at ease with herself—not because her labours were at an end, but because she thought she saw an effectual way in which to meet the difficulties that presented themselves. It required an effort to bring herself to consent to relate the real truth to Wahrend; but when she remembered how unfairly she had led him on to his present position, she felt that such a course was the only apology or extenuation within her reach; and the frankness of her disposition, ever ready to teach her justice as the vehemence of her passions to lead her astray, summoned her to a task which womanly reserve would have bidden her shun.

She was half-debating in her mind whether she would send to request Wahrend's presence, or take the chance of his calling in the course of the day, when Urfort made his appearance.

"I hardly know," said he, as soon as he had executed his usual bow at the door—"I hardly know whether I shall be welcome to-day, Miss; for I can make nothing of this *siesta* business. I am afraid it must be a wiser head than mine to manage it—at all events in such a hurry."

"There is no great hurry, good Urfort," replied the maiden, somewhat mournfully; "take the next day or two to think of it, and perhaps by that time you may be more successful."

"I am glad of that," cried he, and he spoke the words with true sincerity, for he had hardly known how to meet the orphan so as to get rid of her request for the present, and introduce the real object of his visit;—"I am glad of that, for a day or two may make all the difference. But I was afraid you would not hear of it: so that I should almost have scarcely cared to venture here this morning, but that my master has sent me with a letter to you."

"A letter to me!" exclaimed the maiden, as she took the paper offered by the man; "I like not these letters! Why does not De Mara come himself!"

No reply was made to this by Urfort; and, indeed, Madeline did not seem to expect any. It was, as it were, a question addressed to her own musing spirit, as she held the missive from the count unopened in her

hand, apparently unwilling to receive so poor a substitute for him whom her eyes longed to behold, and her heart to welcome.

At length the seal was broken, and she read these words:—

"Dearest Madeline,—Several days have now elapsed since I have allowed myself the pleasure of seeing you. Day after day an unconquerable hesitation and reluctance have prevented my explaining the reason of this. One moment I have determined to seek an interview—another to write, that I might not embarrass you with an unexpected statement. I feel, however, that this duty in one shape or the other has become imperative upon me, and I have preferred the latter, that you may not think it is my intention to take you by surprise.

"The cause of my absence is Albert! Do not think that, in saying this, I am about to alarm your affectionate feelings towards your brother by bringing any accusation against him. Far be it from me to wish or to dare to take such a step. But we are all to a certain extent more or less the creatures of the world; and those who rank highest in it are perhaps more its creatures than those whose humble lot allows them to pass through the mazes of life unnoticed and unobserved.

"I need not point out to you, that since your brother's happy restoration to hearing, some strange and unexplained principle of action has guided his whole career. I observed it myself, but chose to make no remark, fondly hoping that it would escape the observation of others; but such has not been the case. More than one of my friends have spoken to me with great seriousness on the subject; and, what is still more painful, some most officious person, I find, has been writing to my uncle, the Duc de Montaison, on whom, as you well know, much of my future prospects depends. Two days ago I received a letter from that nobleman, informing me that he was given to understand that the brother of the young lady to whom I was attached was pursuing a most extraordinary career—that he had refused the assistance, and even the companionship, of the musical professor with whom he had been provided—that his movements were altogether unaccountable—that he stole out of the city at all hours—that he was absent from home in the depth of the night—and that, in fact, he had attracted so much suspicious attention, that my uncle was informed the police of the place had thought it to be their duty to establish a watch upon his motions. 'These are strange things,' continues the Duke, 'and must be examined. The Count de Mara, a peer of the French empire, and the possible heir of the Duc de Montaison, has high duties to perform; and he must be wary, lest, in early life, one of his first and most important steps should involve him with parties whose faults will be by the world identified with himself.'

"These, dearest Madeline, are the Duc de Montaison's own words. What am I to do? I do not pretend to find fault on my own behalf—I do not pretend to demand any explanation; but, on the other hand, this is certain—that the Duke, both on his own account and on mine, has a right to demand explanations of me; and these explanations I have it not in my power to give.

"The Duke is not a little alarmed by the accounts he has heard, as you will easily understand, when I inform you that he insists upon my journeying to Paris instantly, in order that his mind may be satisfied by a personal inquiry of me into the circumstances.

"Again I must repeat—what am I to do? and how am I to meet my uncle's investigation?

"Yours, dearest Madam,
"Very devotedly,
"De Mara."

What a letter! Every word as she read it, seemed to penetrate deeper and deeper into her brain, and to leave a more searching mark behind. But, agonizing as the words were, they were not half so agonizing as the fact that the charge contained in the letter was founded in truth. A mystery there was!—an explanation there ought to be!—but that explanation she was bound by solemn promises neither to give nor to hint at.

Might not Albert, under such circumstances, be induced to relax somewhat of her vow of concealment! But, alas! there was no time for execution to bear out such a hope. She had parted from him in anger, and he was wandering through the solitudes the neighbourhood of Geneva afforded, to feed his thoughts with that joy which his sister had refused him; and it might be night, or it might be even morning, before he again made his appearance at his lodgings!

Yet something must be done?—some sort of answer must be sent! But what should that answer be?

The letter threatened departure. It was evident that it was hinted at throughout, though not openly avowed. On her reply would rest the balance. How could it be phrased to stay his motions?

Alas! she knew not. Her every faculty was afloat to invent the measure; but they were in so mingled a state of turmoil and confusion, that they did nothing but feed upon and repeat the question—"How could she stay his motions?" without offering a single suggestion in reply.

Yet to think of his departure was madness—to think of his going to bow to the influence of such a man as his uncle was more than madness; for often had De Mara told her that it was only under his repeated solicitations that the duke had consented to his proposals to her, and the letter of that uncle too plainly showed what his commands would be.

Well, she would write! But, in spite of her determination, it was with unsteady hand that her pen traced these words:—

"The Count de Mara demands an explanation which Madeline cannot give; but of this she is convinced—that if the count will but postpone the journey which she presumes is hinted at by his letter, her brother will, on his return this evening or to-morrow morning, undoubtedly afford any elucidation that may be necessary to those movements which she thanks the count for not receiving in the suspicious light which some ill-wisher of hers has endeavoured to force upon the Duc de Montaison."

The letter was no sooner finished than she gave it to Urtort, as if glad to rid of so painful a subject:—"Go back with the answer immediately," cried she; "but at all hazards you must return hither, that I may know in what manner it is received by the count."

"But suppose, my lady,—"

"Suppose nothing!" interrupted she, angrily: "you must return hither, for it is life and death to me to know what symptoms of resolution De Mara evinces on his perusal of my answer. Quick, quick—go with it;—for I shall be labouring under a thousand tortures till I see you back here again."

Well might she describe her mind as labouring under a thousand tortures! A young girl, without compass or rudder, she had been thrown upon the sea of passion; and the strange whirl of events that she had had to contend with during the last few days had become almost too much for the capability of her faculties. Reason, the only guide that could have assisted her through so troublous a navigation, was overborne by the tide of sensations to which the headlong nature of her disposition allowed full force and power; and each new change of circumstance that had been hurried upon her, was driving her still further and further from all opportunity of regaining her former means of prudence and caution.

De Mara threatened immediate departure! In that thought alone there

were a myriad of sharp-pointed daggers gathering round her heart. If he once quitted Geneva, farewell hope, farewell success, farewell happiness; for dread despair would enter as he went out, and render the city the abode of misery and wretchedness! Of what avail then would be the boasted power, which, through Albert, she had hoped to hold over the secrets of his soul? Of what effect this preternatural research into the hidden things of his heart, when he had fled from her neighbourhood to bow before the dictates of an inexorable uncle?

But still there were hopes—there must be hopes:—for to think, even for a moment, that there were none, was placing the hand of death upon her heart, and giving the only object of her soul to annihilation. Her letter promised fair, at least, to stay his progress till an interview had been had with Albert;—and to one of two points she was resolved to bring her brother—either to afford a sufficient explanation to De Mara—or to consent to an immediate use of his arcanum in the way that she had already fruitlessly urged upon him.

In putting together such thoughts as these, in which hope and fear held alternate dominion over her, she passed the time till Urfort made his reappearance.

"Do you bring an answer from the Count de Mara?" exclaimed she, the moment he entered the room.

The man shook his head, as if the action was intended to forerun the reply, and then said, "I heard nothing about any answer, unless indeed—"

"Unless what?" cried Madeline, who perceived that he paused in what he was about to say.

"Why, my lady," continued he, "when I got to the hotel, I found the Chevalier Altoz with my master; and the chevalier was insisting on the risk which the count was running, in not having sooner obeyed the letter that he had received from the Duc de Montaison."

"Ay, ay," muttered Madeline, "I thought I knew who one of the count's disinterested friends was, that were urging my brother's conduct upon his notice. But what said he to my letter?"

"The count, after reading it himself, gave it to the chevalier to read."

"Indeed! Oh, Madeline, how low thou art fallen in thy estate!" and then with an effort she demanded—"and what was Altoz good enough to say in its favour?"

"I did not hear him say any thing in its favour, ma'm'selle; for, after he had read it, he went on to contend more than ever that the count was bound to set off immediately for Paris; because, as he said, to wait in the expectation that Master Albert would submit to an examination, was an absurdity."

"And what said the count?"

"Why, I did not hear much that he said, for, while the chevalier was going on at this rate, I was sent down stairs; but presently after that the bell rang, and I went up again;—and then the count told me that I was to bid Monsieur Jacotot prepare a portmanteau for his instant departure, and that the rest of his luggage was to be got ready to follow after him; and then, as I thought I was not likely to hear any thing further, I came away to you."

"You have heard quite enough," exclaimed the orphan, with anguish in her voice—"and I too much! Go, go, good fellow; I have no further occasion for you. And yet, perhaps—no, there is nothing left for me!—Yes, you may go."

Urfort, unwilling, or unknowing how to make any reply to observations that came so evidently from the heart, withdrew, while the unhappy girl sat and strained her eyes after him; each step, as he descended to the street, was counted;—and when the outer door closed after him, she murmured to herself, "So perishes all hope!"

The Latin poet was too limited in his philosophy when he told the world that "anger is a short madness." Every passion in its excess arrives at the same result. Every passion, when its power is so great as to drive before it the more calm and reasonable determinations of the mind by "the whiff and wind" of its exuberance, is a madness, as far as the unseating of the human judgment is such. When reason and discrimination prevail, the soul has its genuine tone;—when passion, with its ravishing strides, has seized upon the brain, the tenour of the soul is unnerved, and subject to the mercy of each succeeding gust.

The rage and strength of the impulses under which Madeline's soul had been driven for the last week, began to be too much for her. She had as yet fought a gallant battle:—she had met ambuscade with ambuscade, manœuvre with manœuvre, attack with attack. But it was against fearful odds that she had been contending. De Mara had been against her—Urfort had been against her—and, what was worse than ten thousand De Maras, or ten thousand Urforts, herself had been against her.

In spite, therefore, of all her efforts, the clouds of discomfiture were fast gathering around her. Little by little she had been weighed down by the variety and force of the attacks she had undergone; and in proportion as she had gone beyond her strength to resist them, in the same proportion, now that she began to give way, did she yield to the current that had set against her, and feel the impulse of the pressing stream.

The mixture of Albert's preternatural knowledge, to which she had attached such price, had probably assisted in producing this result. It was a sort of treacherous ally that had at first insinuated itself into the stronghold of her brain, and then suddenly giving way when its aid was most needed and relied upon. In one of her most desperate struggles to counteract the intrigues of De Mara, she had leaned upon this prop for support: it had sunk beneath her weight, and the turn against her had in consequence become still more powerful and headlong.

When Urfort quitted her, hope went with him. Never before had it so entirely left her. When De Mara had roused all her indignation by his conduct at the ball, hope, though it seemed dead for awhile, still lingered in the midst of the despair she had felt; and since that time the darling visitant of every human heart had rather gained strength in her bosom, than lost it. But her despair now seemed irremediable: the departure of De Mara was a circumstance which her imagination had never contemplated:—the placing of hundreds of miles between them was a feature which all her consideration of the case had never suggested. Let that once happen, and death could not too soon befriend her; for even all her ardour of temperament was not able to feed her with an expectation that, once departed, he would ever again find his way to her feet.

But if this were hopeless, it appeared equally hopeless that any art of hers could stay his journey. What if she went to him?—What if she wrote again?—What if she entreated?—No! hopeless, hopeless, each and all. His journey was resolved, and her evil genius, in the shape of Altoz, stood by his side to prompt him to its instantaneous and irretrievable adoption.

Thus she looked around her, and found that all was darkness and despair. She still would have contended against fate itself, but she felt that the hand of events was upon her, and prevented the action of her thoughts. It was the worst disease of the mind under which she laboured—a consciousness of what was wanted, joined to the incapacity of devising any medium through which that want should be supplied. She was like the hapless traveller in the desert—alas! to well awake to the burning and unquenchable thirst that had taken possession of him, but looking in vain for the means of allaying it.

Are we to wonder then that with disappointment for her portion, and the threatened departure of De Mara hovering over her as the finishing stroke to this scene of sorrow, that a species of madness seemed to assert its empire over her. The weak point of her character, as we have hitherto seen, was the impetuosity with which she embraced the first offer that her fancy suggested, whereby to conquer any difficulty under which her mind was labouring. This arose from the ardency of her temper being too great to allow her to weigh those consequences, which to a calculating head would appear likely to follow; and not from the want of power to make that calculation, had she chosen to apply herself to the task. But now that events had become too painful for her endurance, what was formerly a weakness, grew into a confirmed disease. The good and the bad, the right and the wrong, became so mixed and indistinct in her brain, that it was unable to hold the balance between them, and she was ready to receive the very first proposal that a disturbed and heat-oppressed imagination might offer for her adoption. The machinations of those who had resolved her ruin had surrounded her; and in first token of their success, her airy and romantic mind, which, had it been fostered, would have shone lovely and various as the rainbow of spring, had melted into a cloudy and overcast gloom, which threatened the universal deluge and destruction of her faculties.

But though ready to embrace any opportunity that might present itself, her overborne mind, stretched beyond the tone of nature's function, was unable to suggest a movement. She sat, where Urfort had left her, unable to conjure a thought of her own, and waiting for some external impulse or circumstance to awaken her from the helplessness that had superseded the vigorous action of her mind, which had hitherto prevailed over every difficulty, as long as there was aught of hope remaining at the bottom of her Pandora box of misery.

While thus stationary and irresolute, she heard a foot-step upon the stairs. Whose might it be? She hardly knew for whom to wish;—and to dread the presence of any was past, for her wretchedness had reached its climax, and she defied all that man could do to add to what was already full to overflowing.

It was Wahrend whose step she heard. When he entered the room, her head mechanically bowed in acknowledgment of his presence, and her lips moved in silent show of greeting; but it would perhaps be too much to say, that she did any thing to evince her consciousness of the individual person who stood before her. At all events the occurrences of the past hour had completely driven from her memory all those honest resolutions which had graced her repentance towards the Swiss, and her gaze upon him was not sufficient to call to her mind the duty that his mal-treatment demanded at her hands.

"Mademoiselle Schvolen," said the visiter, as he took his station near her—"I am come to say farewell for the last time. Be not angry that I have this duty to perform; for this time, at least, it is you, not I, that have entailed this task upon me."

The sorrowing girl looked at him, as if listening to his words, and again she bowed her head:—but doubtful it is whether a syllable of his speech made an impression on her mind, save only the word "farewell," that jarred on the much-fretted chord of her heart, and gave her that involuntary shudder which her companion could not but notice, though he hardly knew how to account for it.

"Believe me," continued he, when he saw that she was not preparing to speak, "I come with no reproaches on my lips.—Nay, I even think I have almost dismissed them from my heart, though for awhile they may haunt the place, like the shadow of something that has ceased to be. I am more willing to believe my judgment, than your sincerity, has gone astray. But

be it as it may, 'farewell' is the only word I would utter, and 'farewell' is the only word that I would have in reply."

"Farewell!" murmered the orphan;—"oh, yes; you shall have that word a thousand—and a million times, for you ask the only sound that my lips are able to utter."

"Farewell! farewell!" cried the Swiss; "and may you be more happy with the Count de Mara, than you seem to think I could make you!"

"Happy with De Mara!" shrieked Madeline; "who are you?—and who gave you license to plant daggers in my heart? Wahrend, I think you are; but Albert must have been at work, and given you some other soul; for the Wahrend that I knew was kind and gentle, with a mind as incapable of cruelty as De Mara's is of humanity."

The Swiss turned away his head at these words, and sighed deeply. "What does this mean?" at length he said:—"what is this maze into which I am plunged, and which one moment seems to promise the dearest of happiness, the next the most carking of misery?"

"Let them mean the last," exclaimed Madeline; "and I will be your faithful companion."

"You my companion," returned the other: "if that could but be, they should mean any thing or nothing. You my companion! and yet do not use that word, for it was the happy term that dwelt upon our lips at Unwalden, before I had tasted sorrow, or you had been tempted to——"

"To betray, you would have said. Spare not the word. Spare not the belief. I have some flitting recollection passing through my mind that I had something to say to you about betrayal. But it is gone for the present. Another time I will tell it you; and if you are indeed Wahrend, with his honest heart you shall thank me for my words; at least I thought so this morning."

"Madeline, what say you of another time? Oh, do not again mislead my hopes! Deep was the resolution that I had formed:—great was the controul I put upon my feelings, before I could determine to come and say 'farewell.'—Let us be honest, though too plain words should be spoken in its cause.—Is it De Mara or myself who claims your heart?"

"De Mara a claim upon my heart!" exclaimed Madeline vehemently; "yes, such a claim as the tiger has upon the deer, or the eagle of the sun upon the lamb. Wahrend, when we meet again, never let that name pass your lips!"

"Is it possible," cried the Swiss, with astonishment mixed with delight in his voice;—"is it possible that my fears have deceived me, and that the Frenchman is no nearer than myself to your heart?"

"Nor so near," replied Madeline; "for I am not yet so lost to sense and feeling as not to know the claim of honesty over villany."

"Villany?"

"Of the deepest die—if insult, treachery, and falsehood can make the mixture."

"Are these words in earnest?" exclaimed Wahrend, with strong emotion in his voice.

"Look at me; and let that tell you whether I am in any humour to speak at Folly's bidding. Do you see the laugh in my eye, or joy on my cheek? If you do, they belie the agony of my heart, that should be written in every line of my countenance in characters as deep as the grave."

"And De Mara has caused all this?" demanded the Swiss.

Again Madeline bowed her head: the action, which before was tame and mechanical, now came strong upon her questioner's imagination, as though a thousand voices had acclaimed in confirmation of his asking.

"Heaven give me power," cried he, "to think of these things with calmness! But think of them I must. Oh, Madeline, I knew you in your

happiness—wo is me! I know you in your misery. In that happiness I was a sharer; and now I claim a right to partake in your sorrow. I claim it on your own words. You called on me to be your companion in wretchedness, and I answer to the cry."

"No, no, Wahrend—this must not be. I have injured you already too much. Your name and my uncle's will ever be a reproach to my heart. I will be companion to myself, for no one can better or revenge my cause."

"I can revenge it," cried Wahrend, with fervour; "and I will revenge it. I feel the difficulty of my position; but give me leave to speak to this man, and I will hazard the inference."

"It is in vain, good Wahrend," returned the orphan, mournfully; "for De Mara quits Geneva this day. Perhaps ere now he is beyond its walls."

"His journey must be prevented," cried the Swiss.

"What say you? What say you?" exclaimed the orphan with vehemence: "oh! repeat that again! Tell me that you will see De Mara, and not let him depart till this explanation is given; and I will thank you with my latest breath—I will thank you on my bended knees."

"I promise it, Madeline:—from the bottom of my soul I promise it."

The look of the bewildered girl brightened as the Swiss pledged his faith to stop the count's departure. The solemn manner in which she had bound herself to dismiss Wahrend, with a candid confession of the deceit she had practised on him, died away from her mind; and again a faint glimpse of hope stole into her heart, as she heard him pledge himself to do that which should prevent for awhile the journey of the nobleman. Wahrend, as he gazed upon her, observed the change in her aspect and he again reiterated his promise.

"But it must be done quickly," cried she; "I know, from too certain information, that this day he quits the city for ever, so that not a moment is to be lost."

"The sooner the thing is undertaken, the better will it correspond with the present temper of my mind," returned Wahrend:—"I thought that I had come hither to say farewell for ever; but your words have instilled fresh joy into my heart; and it is now with gladsome voice I say farewell, for I look only to the hour when we are to meet again."

"But you will see De Mara now?"

"In one hour from this time I pledge myself to be with him; and in two expect to see me return, the comforter of your sorrow. God bless you, dearest Madeline!" added he, in conclusion, and his voice somewhat wavered as he spoke—"in two hours, Heaven permitting, we meet again."

With these words he departed, and Madeline was left alone. For a moment she asked herself the question—what might so grave a leave-taking portend? but the thought speedily merged in the one absorbing recollection that his errand was to De Mara, and that his pledge was to prevent his journey for that day—perhaps for the next, and the next. Here, then, again was time to work in. Albert must be found—Urfort must be sent for—the train must be laid—the arcanum must be put in operation, and her sole concern of heart must be confirmed or disbanded irretrievably and for ever.

It might be that for a moment she entertained a thought as to the manner in which Wahrend would proceed to stay the nobleman's departure; but it was on this point that the diseased state of her imagination chiefly betrayed itself. So far she felt her weakness as to know that she had in vain taxed her brain to discover a device by which that object might be accomplished, and that Wahrend had pledged himself to do that which was beyond the scope of her power of apprehension. But there she stopped. The chain of reason in her mind was too much broken to allow her to pursue the subject, for the purpose of seeing by what method the Swiss

would make good his bond; and when she touched upon the point, her whole faculty became bewildered and astray. The source of her perception had been disturbed, and it no longer flowed in a clear and unbroken stream. It was as though one of her senses had fallen away, or been blasted by the fire of her own brain, as the solitary oak that grows upon the marish heath has one side of its magnificent overspread struck by the lightning that accompanies the storm: to the casual observer it seems a tree entire; but when walked round and examined, the injury becomes evident and declared. Thus it was that Wahrend had not appreciated the change that had taken place in the orphan. His path was honest and straightforward, and he little weened that it was necessary for him to wind round and round her to interpret the real meaning of the scene that had just passed between them. Madeline had but one object in her heart—to stay the journey of De Mara; but all-important as that object was to her, she had been forced to acknowledge to herself that her invention was at an end, and that it was in vain that she taxed her ability to meet the difficulty. In this situation she had been encountered by Wahrend. He had promised to do that for her which she was unable to do for herself. It was for this that she had thanked him; —it was for this that joy had again illumined her countenance. All this was too subtle for Wahrend's comprehension:—a more agreeable solution of what had taken place lay nearer the surface, and, having found that, he did not trouble himself to look farther for what might be more true—but, at the same time, more unpalatable.

It has already been said that a gleam of hope once more showed itself to Madeline. But it did not find her as of old. Her brain had received a shock which quiet and tranquillity could alone restore: the new expectation, therefore, that had been lighted in her bosom rather did her harm than good, for it again launched her into the stormy sea where she had so long been tossed about at the mercy of her persecutors:—instead of peace, it brought anxiety; instead of tranquillity, a continual turbulence and harassment to the imagination.

Yes, once more did she resign herself to the ardours, the heart-movings, the excitations, and the disturbances to which the name of De Mara had for so long a period been the key. Once more she resolved to seek Albert, and entreat him by every argument she could enforce upon his feelings and affections to submit his discovery to the test which she had proposed. Once more she determined to send for Urfort, and bid him prepare for those arrangements, which Albert's consent would be the signal for putting in requisition. These, however, were but the minor points which were to marshal her the way to the grand desideratum on which her whole stake depended; and therefore, whatever gloomy anticipations she might have as to the result of the latter, of the success of the former her excited imagination would not allow her to doubt. Urfort must prepare the plan that she should dictate to him, and Albert must yield to the irresistible fervour of her pleadings, when he was made aware that he held the balance of his sister's contentment in the one hand, and of her perdition in the other.

But where was she to find her brother? Each moment pressed; and she could better afford to lose half her existence at another time than half an hour at this. She had not seen Albert since the period when she parted from him with anger in her eye, and indignation on her brow, at his pertinacious refusal of her proposal. She therefore knew little of his movements since that time, but she was sufficiently acquainted with his general habits to fear that she must not expect to see him till the night was far advanced.

She would, however, go to his room, for, though he might not be there, it was possible that she might find some memorandum or token by which to judge of the probability of his return.

She went; and, to her surprise and delight, found him whom she sought.

His being there was not that her recollection of his habits was incorrect, but on his way from home he had been met by Wahrend, who had made him acquainted with the determination he had formed of visiting his sister for the last time that morning to bid her farewell for ever, and who entreated him by his old friendship for him to accompany him back thither.

"I will go with you," said Albert, "and should it be necessary, make my appearance: but I cannot see any thing to call for that, and I would therefore rather wait in my own room till you know whether you need my presence."

Wahrend had consented to this arrangement, but the unexpected turn his interview with Madeline had taken had caused him entirely to forget that Albert was waiting for him; and he had therefore taken his departure to seek De Mara without exchanging a word with the youth.

When Albert heard the door of his chamber open, he looked up with the expectation of seeing Wahrend enter. When he perceived that that expectation was disappointed, and that it was his sister who was present, he started, for he remembered the manner in which he had last parted from her, and he knew not in what tone of mind she again appeared before him. But though this thought flitted across his memory, his anxiety still was to know what had come of the Swiss; so that as she approached the place where he was sitting, he almost involuntarily exclaimed, "Have you not seen Wahrend?"

"Yes, my brother; and he has taught me to bless his name, for he has shown himself the friend of my affliction. He has undertaken the commencement of that labour which it is for you to consummate."

"What mean you, Madeline? I thought that he had come hither to say farewell for ever, and to quit Geneva for a happier spot."

"Let no one quit Geneva!" cried the girl. "Oh that some besieging army were at hand to prevent a single living creature departing from its precincts!"

"Tell me, Madeline—was not 'farewell' the word that came from the lips of Wahrend?"

"It was!" returned she, with a sickly smile; "but we all think that 'farewell' is to be said, before there is any necessity for it. It is a grievous heart-heavy word, and should not be spoken lightly."

"To what is this strange discourse to lead?" demanded Albert.

"It must lead to the alteration of your unkind resolve, that has haunted me with evil omen each moment since we parted. But forget what you then said, and glad my heart with the signal of consent."

"Sister, it cannot be! I thought our last interview was of too painful a nature ever to have been renewed. Why do you thus revive the subject each moment that we come together? Do you think I love to refuse you that which you demand? Do you think that I have ventured to do it from any light or fickle resolution? Believe me, had not my whole soul revolted at the thought, I would never have subjected myself to such a scene as that which has so lately passed between us. Madeline, dear Madeline, pause in good time, and never again speak on this topic."

"Albert, I must speak on it. I must make this demand at your hands; and rather let me conjure you to pause before you break my heart, and confirm this wild beating of my brain, that threatens I know not what. De Mara is on the eve of departure:—this very day he would have gone, but that fortunately is averted. The delay, however, is but of short interval:—to-morrow, perhaps, he leaves the city, never to return. Albert, I pray you by all that sister can pray by, to be speedy in your consent."

"Why not let De Mara depart?"

"No, no," interrupted Madeline; "I must read his heart, or die. For ever—yes, for ever, have we separated; but at least let me have the satis-

faction of knowing what he really thought of one who has thrown away her affection for him, and who now only thinks of his name with a shudder, as the old man looks back at some mad hair-breadth peril of his youth."

"Madeline, is this true? Have you indeed banished De Mara from your heart? And shall Wahrend—"

"Wahrend shall help me in my task," she cried; "he has this day shown himself the same noble, disinterested, kindly creature, that we ever knew him to be."

"Those are indeed his attributes. But how is he to help you?"

"De Mara threatens departure," replied the agitated girl; "but good Wahrend has promised to take care of that."

"Wahrend!" exclaimed the brother; "in what dangerous scheme is it that you have entangled him?—Is it not enough that you and I must be consigned to a life of misery, but must our gentle friend be also joined in our wretchedness?"

"What misery? What wretchedness? Not for worlds would I have brought either the one or the other on poor Wahrend. Alas, too much already has he suffered through my foolish plotting!—Heaven send me power to reward his patience! But this was of his own proposing. He found my heart bleeding with the wounds that De Mara had inflicted on it. He drew from me the history of my wo; and it was he who offered to speak to this misdoer."

"If this be so," exclaimed Albert, "then have you signed the death-warrant of one or other. Wahrend and the Frenchman will never separate while both survive."

"Brother, brother!" shrieked Madeline; "your senses are astray. Wahrend promised only to speak to De Mara."

"Ay, ay, 'speak' was the word to you; but fearful will be the organ through which he will address the count."

"He promised only to speak," murmured Madeline.

"Think you the brave man talks of such things as these to a woman? He might promise only to speak, but he meant far other in his heart. O God, O God, where is the curse that was entailed upon us by this haughty intriguer to have its end?"

"I will not believe it," exclaimed the alarmed girl, while a thrilling tremor took possession of her frame. "Wahrend is so gentle, that he has ever seemed as if he could not injure the meanest thing that crawled. Whence, then, is he to muster the sanguinary purpose that you would put upon him?"

"You have described the brave man's character. His heart, when at peace, is tender as the mother's towards her babe; but rouse it, and the lion is more safe to meet—to face the tiger in his lair the more prudent choice."

Madeline would have replied, but at that moment the servant entered the room, and presented her with a letter. It was from Wahrend, and its contents ran thus:—

"Dearest Madeline—By the time you receive this I shall have redeemed my pledge. It is a fearful one, but I repent me not that I have given it. I would not write, but that I feel that the fortune of the day may be against me, and that if I write not now, never again may my soul interchange thought with yours. But even as I pen these lines, I persuade myself that it is more for your sake than my own; for if this day sees the end of my life, it may be matter of comfort to you to know that I shall die invoking blessings on your head, and thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the permission you have given me to make your cause my own.

"Yours in all faith and love,

"WAHREND."

Madeline's eye ran over these words with the rapidity of one who felt that her whole destiny was involved in them. In a moment she interpreted the meaning. She shrieked—let fall the paper—and would herself have fallen too, but that her brother caught her in his arms.

"Albert," cried she, with horror in her look, "it is too true:—all that you have said is to come to pass—perhaps has come to pass ere this. Fly, my brother, fly! Seek them out. Search the count's lodgings;—search Wahrend's;—search Geneva."

"But how am I to leave you in this state, my sister?" demanded the alarmed youth.

"In what state?" cried she, springing from his arms, and tottering forward:—"do you not see that I am calm and strong? Fly, I say, fly! Oh, gracious Heaven, be merciful on one that has suffered her share, and let not blood be the consummation of the horrors that have been gathering around her!" And then perceiving that Albert still lingered, as if irresolute to leave her in such a state—"Why go you not?" she exclaimed: "why seek you not these murderers, who would kill themselves and me at one fell stroke. Tell Wahrend as he loves me—as he values my good wishes, or my favour, to desist from his horrible purpose. Tell De Mara—No; wo is me, I have no power there! But if you find them at the deadly struggle, stand between them, my brother, and prevent the fatal conflict."

With these words she sank upon a chair in a state of utter exhaustion; while Albert, hardly knowing which way to decide, yet fearful to delay his departure any longer, reluctantly quitted the house to seek those between whom he knew the contention would be hot and fierce.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Semp. My sword shall answer thee! Have at thy heart!—
Juba. Nay, then, beware thine own, proud, barbarous man!
ADDISON'S CATO.

Dost thou imagine thou canst slide in blood,
And not be tainted with a shameful fall?—OLD PLAY.

WAHREND had well expressed the feelings of his mind in the short letter which he had addressed to Madeline. Her manner during their interview had been strange and unusual; but still he imagined that he might fairly interpret her words into a returning affection towards him, and the unhesitating way in which she had accepted the offer of his services with respect to De Mara had greatly assisted in bringing him to that conclusion. How far she had previously been involved with that nobleman, the Swiss did not care to ask himself. There are some questions from which the mind shrinks unless absolutely forced upon its attention by another. Thus it was with Wahrend; and as there was none other to insist on the consideration of the subject, he was happy to avoid it, as one little calculated to afford him satisfaction. But whatever might have been the favour she had formerly shown to De Mara, the Swiss had at least this reflection for his consolation—those days were gone by—the Frenchman's reign was at an end—and her heart, as far as his simplicity would allow him to judge, had returned to that train of thought which had been so gracious and delightful when together they had wandered through the soft glades and copses that surrounded Unwalden.

Yes, the reign of De Mara was at an end; and Wahrend was not sorry, though the risk that it entailed on himself was great, that Madeline had sanctioned his visit to the nobleman, as it must necessarily be the means of undermining his power, and claim upon her feelings more irremediably than ever. He was to present himself to De Mara as the representative of Madeline. He was to demand the meaning of his conduct towards her. He was to prosecute that demand perhaps even to the shedding of blood. But however painful all this might be in one point of view, it afforded satisfaction on another, for it must infallibly be the means of showing the count that his empire was at an end, while it gave himself a claim upon Madeline such as he had never before possessed.

But, independently of the claim which he himself would derive from this proceeding, there was another feeling in his mind which received satisfaction from the destined separation between Madeline and De Mara, and of which he was to be the organ. It was true that the count had been his rival; but Wahrend had sufficient honesty of heart to do justice to the Frenchman's merits, notwithstanding the invidious position in which he had found him on his arrival at Geneva. What he had himself seen of him at the Plain Palais, and had since gathered about him in casual remarks from Madeline and her brother, had made him aware of the talent and address of the nobleman. At once he had confessed his superiority as a man of the world to himself. At once he had perceived that in the battle-field of love he was likely to be overborne by so skilful and prepared an antagonist. Nay, so entirely had he done justice to the count's power in this respect, that had even Madeline herself applied to him on the subject, he would have admitted to her the advantages which his rival had at his command. But though his manliness and candour were too great to permit him to decry any portion of the address and insinuating qualities of the Frenchman, this very admission served, on the other hand, to make his fear of him the greater—his aversion to him the more rooted and determined. Hence, from his first knowledge of the count's pretensions to the affections of Madeline, he had entertained towards him a jealous and undisguised sentiment of dislike; and hence, when Madeline so warmly worded her description of her quarrel with the nobleman, Wahrend had gladly embraced the opportunity that it afforded him of putting himself forward as her champion, and the avenger of her wrongs.

It was with these reflections that his mind was filled, as he hastily proceeded towards his lodgings, to avail himself of the hour which, according to the terms of his agreement with his mistress, was yet his own. Wahrend was a brave man—a man brave in the best sort of bravery—courageous, without rashness—determined, without audacity. Such a man as this may be impelled to the feeling that he is called on to face another, sword to sword, and life for life. Such a man may forget common sense, and the wisdom that nature herself has condescended to plant in his bosom; but, at all events, he does not undertake the affair with the hot-headed absurdity of one of those weak heads who are but one degree removed from a ward in Bedlam, or with the vain-glorious mouthing of a fire-eater, who hopes to gain the applause of the lowest rabble, at the expense of his character with the wiser, the better, and the more judicious portion of mankind. It might be that Wahrend had some misgivings as to the course in which he was engaged; but, even if so, he was too far involved to retract. His word had been passed on the subject, to her for whose smiles he lived, and whose frowns he feared more than death; and, at the same time, the step that he was about to take seemed calculated to furnish him with a means, justified by the practice of the world, of getting rid of the rivalry of De Mara for ever. These were the considerations that determined him to pursue the course which his interview that morn-

ing with Madeline had commenced, and he therefore steadily prepared himself for the undertaking. For awhile he forced himself to forget her whose sake had brought him to this, that he might turn his attention to such things as were not so immediately connected with her. But the interval was but short. When he thought of the disposition of his property, it was she who seemed to him to claim its possession; for he was that day, perhaps, going to present her with his life; and what could he better do with that which his parents had bestowed on him with that life, than unite it to his more precious gift? not in the hope of enhancing it, but in proof of how entirely and altogether her image had commanded him in his doings that day. When he thought of the times that might be if things went well, it was still Madeline that came upon his mind, as the one essential ingredient that was necessary to the filling of his cup of bliss, and without whom riches, wealth, and honours were no better than a miserable drop, fit only to be discarded. Thus, then, the image of his mistress was speedily returned to his recollection, whichever way he directed his thoughts; and the perpetual consideration of how he might best add to her happiness and enjoyment was the genuine test of the reality of his love, when compared to the selfish and wily affectation of the passion, as evinced by him whom he was about to seek.

It was in furtherance of this consideration, that the idea first entered his mind of the propriety of his writing to Madeline, ere he quitted his lodgings for his encounter with the nobleman. He felt the peril in which he was about to be involved, and his own heart was able to instruct him how he should feel, were another placed in his situation, and he in that of Madeline. Those same feelings, he imagined, would be extant in the bosom of his mistress; and as the affection of his heart had induced him to bestow on her those means of worldly comforts which were within his gift, still more did the same sentiment call upon him to provide her, to the full extent of his power, with that peace of mind without which mountains of wealth would be unenjoyable. Their interview of the morning had, on her side, been marked throughout by a rapidity and perturbation of manner, which, though it had not let him into the whole depth of her state of mind, had at least made him aware that she was labouring under considerable excitement of feeling. It was not to be expected that that excitement would endure; and he therefore felt bound to provide, to the utmost of his scope, against any of her own self-reproaches that might arise, should the events of the day be of a natnre to awaken any such within her bosom.

The writing and despatching of those few lines, which we have already had the opportunity of reading, were the last act to detain him from going in search of his rival; and, having seen his messenger depart with the missive, he himself proceeded towards the hotel of the count.

On his arrival at De Mara's abode, the first person with whom he met was the punctilious Monsieur Jacotot, who, as he had not received any orders to deny his master, had admitted his being at home, and was preparing to make himself acquainted with the visiter's name, for the purpose of carrying it to the count, when Urfort descended into the hall where they were standing. One glance was sufficient to remind him who Wahrend was; and knowing how the count's business stood with the orphan, he could not help surmising that this unexpected visit portended some change in the aspect of affairs, for which neither he nor De Mara was prepared. The quiet demeanor of the Swiss was not very much calculated to induce the idea that he had come on any openly hostile errand: but, at all events, his having found his way to the count's hotel must have some intention for its prompter; and, even if it were only for the purpose of seeing what preparations for travel were going on, it would be necessary to meet his approach with due caution.

With these reflections hurrying through his mind, Urfort immediately obtruded himself into the company of Wahrend and Jacotot, and interrupted the question of the latter, who was about to demand the name of the stranger, by observing, "Monsieur Jacotot, you are wanted up-stairs immediately."

The old French lacquey, who had been watching the progress of Urfort with the count for the last few days with a jealous eye, replied somewhat surlily:—"I do not know what you mean by being wanted up-stairs. There is but one person in this house who has a right to command me. If you mean that the Count de Mara wants me, please to be more explicit."

Urfort, who by his mode of addressing the veteran, had hoped to avoid the announcement that De Mara was in the house, bit his lips at the observation; but, perceiving that the mischief was done, and determined to get rid of the lacquey, he replied, "I do mean what you have so elegantly expressed. The Count De Mara requires your presence in his own room."

Jacotot made a stiff bow of recognition, as expressive of his willingness to obey the summons of his master, and then marched up-stairs with a profound gravity, that was intended to chill this new intruder upon the count's livery into something like awe and respect.

Urfort, when he perceived that the old man was fairly out of hearing, moved nearer to the Swiss, and said, "I believe you were asking for my master. I am sorry to say that he is most particularly engaged at present."

"Be so good as to tell him," replied the other, "that M. Wahrend desires to have an opportunity of speaking with him. I think, when he hears my name, that he will waive present business for the purpose of seeing me."

"I am sure I beg your pardon," said Urfort; "but the count is just on the point of setting out for a long journey, and his orders to me were so peremptory, that I hardly know how to venture to carry even your name to him. Is it not possible that a letter would serve your purpose?"

"I beg," said Wahrend, somewhat angrily, "that you will act as I have directed you. I will be answerable to your master for any blame he may attach to you."

Urfort would still have attempted to prevent the interview between Wahrend and the count; but at that moment De Mara himself descended into the hall where he was holding the Swiss in parley. Wahrend met him as he reached the foot of the stairs with the observation—"I am sorry, my lord, to learn from your servant that your business is so pressing, more especially as that upon which I come will require your immediate attention."

The count, who had descended for the purpose of inquiring the reason why Urfort had sent Jacotot to him unbidden, was now easily able to solve that which had previously been a riddle to him, and he replied to the speech of the Swiss—

"You, of course, must be aware of the due importance of what you have to say, sir; but I trust that I may be allowed to form an opinion of my own on the subject, without taking yours for granted."

"Most assuredly; and if your lordship will lead the way to a private apartment, that opportunity shall be afforded you instantly."

De Mara (like Urfort before him) had a feeling that this visit of the Swiss might have well been dispensed with; but as he had made his appearance while Urfort was endeavouring to get rid of the intruder, he saw no way of avoiding the interview which was proposed, and he therefore replied by introducing Wahrend to an apartment up-stairs, whither Urfort took care to follow them.

When the rivals had taken their seats, there was a pause.

"May I entreat," said the count, "that we proceed to business? I have several engagements this morning."

Wahrend stiffly replied, "I only wait till your lordship shall have dismissed your servant to state the nature of my errand."

De Mara looked somewhat confused at having such an oversight pointed out to him by the Swiss: but the fact was that Urfort, though he wore his livery, was so little identified in his mind as a servant, that he had not thought of the light in which he would appear to the Swiss. A slight colour, therefore, suffused his cheek, as he turned to Urfort, and said, "You may wait below till I want you, but be sure not to be out of the way."

Urfort, as he withdrew, muttered to himself, "Our Switzer, methinks, is mighty particular this morning as to his company. However, I know no law against listening at a key-hole, so I shall be bold to act this once on my own responsibility."

But Wahrend and the count watched the loiterer as he unwillingly withdrew from the room; and as soon as the door was closed, the latter hastened to say, lest the Swiss should again allude to the irregularity of his allowing his servant to be present at their conference—"Now, sir, we are alone; and may I request to hear your explanation in brief."

"My lord," returned the other, with great seriousness, "I beg in the first place to assure you that the office I have undertakan is not of a nature to give pleasure to my mind: but the duty that is imposed upon me I feel to be so imperative, that though the hope of its leading to any thing satisfactory is beyond my expectations, I am not the less impressed with the necessity of carrying it into execution."

"Perhaps, sir," interrupted the count, "it wonld be more advisable to inform me what this wonderful duty is, before you take the trouble to descant so eloquently on its mere abstract qualifications. At present it is mere words and darkness with me."

Wahrend bit his lip at the abruptness of the nobleman's manner, but still continued his observations in the same undisturbed accent, as if determined that nothing should anticipate the discharge of his task in the way which he prescribed to himself. "Allow me to inform you in the first place," said he, "that I have this morning been with Mademoiselle Schvolen."

"Sir, it requires great allowance for you to tell me that, for I can assure you I derive no satisfaction from hearing it."

"You will probably derive still less," continued the Swiss, "when I also inform you that I have heard from that lady's own lips the painful manner in which you have played with her feelings, and taken advantage of the privilege of acquaintanceship with which she honoured you."

"Sir, sir!" cried De Mara—"but you have said enough on this subjcct. Will you now be pleased to explain the magnificent motive which may have induced you to present yourself at my hotel?"

"My first motive is that you should hear what I have to say on this business; my second, that we might mutually discuss the way in which reparation may best be made to the lacerated feelings of the lady."

"Indeed! a mutual discussion with so eminent a defender of the sex will be highly edifying. It was a pity you insisted on my servant quitting the room, for all the world should be admitted to so instructive a discourse."

"Your lordship is welcome to take my remarks as you please. But of this, at all events, I am sure—that I must be heard out. When that is done will be the time for me to pass a comment on the pleasantries with which you seem disposed to intersperse this interview."

"Sir, rely upon it," said the count, hotly, "you shall be heard out:—it would be a pity to check such amusing effusions. I beg that you will proceed."

"The few observations I had to make are nearly concluded," said the other: "I have heard from Mademoiselle Schvolen's own lips that you

have insulted her; and my errand here, therefore, is to know what reparation you propose offering to her wounded feelings. I do not wish to push things to extremities, but it is impossible for me to have listened to the words that fell from her this morning, without feeling that I am called upon, by every manly and honourable sentiment, to require at your hands an apology for the unjustifiable manner in which you have wounded her mind, to an extent that I could not have believed, had I not witnessed it. It was because I witnessed this, that I held myself bound to have an interview with you on the subject; and the only reason why I did not forerun that intention with a letter, was because I was at the same time given to understand that you were on the point of quitting Geneva."

There was a pause when Wahrend ceased to speak, ere De Mara exclaimed, "I presume that you have finished what you had to say; and now permit me in my turn to ask by what right you have come hither to demand this apology, supposing (which I deny) that I have acted in the manner which you have been pleased so courteously to describe?"

"I come by right of the interest which I feel in the happiness of Mademoiselle Schvolen."

"And what if I am not willing to admit the right which you suppose that interest gives you?"

"I think I could show you that in my case it does give such a right. But to avoid dispute on this point, let me also inform you that I have come hither at the lady's own request."

"At Madeline's request!" cried the count: "by Heaven! this is beyond endurance! Have not only my secrets been laid open, but am I to be put in leading-strings too?—Oh! this is well—mighty well! But one thing further, sir, and I am satisfied—Did she authorize you to make use of the terms which you have employed!"

"With respect to the accusation against you I have but used her own words. But as to the demand I have made, of course I need not inform your lordship, that it is not customary to enter into particulars with a lady when we feel that we are called on to redress the wrongs that she has received."

"You have said enough, sir," exclaimed De Mara, vehemently; "you have said enough. And now let me tell you in return, that had Madeline herself come with you, I never would have acknowledged your right to demand an apology at my hands. What acquaintance you may have had with her formerly, I know not. But this I know—that since your reappearance here, you have stood in my path like a dreamy incubus or some shadowy apparition. But at least I will take care not to give substance to your right to cross my steps. Sir, you are an intruder between me and my pursuits; and I refuse to give you any explanation whatever with respect to Mademoiselle Schvolen."

"I was afraid that it would come to this," replied the Swiss, quietly, "and I have accordingly prepared myself for the alternative. Count, we do not wear swords, but we must show that we know how to use them."

"With all my heart! Your proposal pleases me, for all the apology I can ever make must be at my sword's point; and it may chance that you at the same time will receive a hint of the folly of passing between me and my passions. But we must to business instantly. The Chevalier Altoz—"

"I crave your pardon," interrupted Wahrend: "the pressing nature of the case, joined to the fear that I might find you already departed from Geneva, brought me here almost immediately on my quitting Mademoiselle Schvolen; and I have, therefore, had no time to engage a friend to act on my behalf. Nor, indeed, do I know that I could obtain one in less than a day or two, for I have no acquaintances in Geneva, and should be obliged to ride over to my own neighbourhood for the purpose."

"The matter requires no explanation," cried De Mara, "for I like it better as it is. I have weapons at hand, and with your permission the business shall be brought to an issue at once. My servant, if you do not object, shall alone be present; and, in order to prevent any mistakes, whatever orders I give him shall be made in your presence; or, if you would rather, you shall yourself give him the necessary directions."

"There is no occasion for that," replied Wahrend; "I have no doubt that your lordship will arrange every thing for the best."

Wahrend's consent having thus been given to this plan, the count summoned Urfort to the apartment; and, as he had been true to his resolution of taking up his post at the key-hole, it was not very long before he answered the summons.

"Urfort," said the count, when he entered the room, "this gentleman and I have some business to settle which will require your attendance. Take this key, and fetch the swords which you will find in the cupboard which it unlocks; but be sure that you breathe not a syllable of your errand to any one that you may meet; and throw my cloak over them, that it may not be seen by the servants what it is you are carrying."

Urfort gave a sort of half chuckle as he took the key, as if the errand had awakened comfortable fancies in his mind; and he strode away in all haste to obey the count's directions.

The short pause that ensued ere he returned was passed in solemn silence. The action that was to come had been agreed upon, and they were only waiting till the instruments should be furnished to commence the deadly conflict. Words seemed to be at an end between them, and hereafter deeds were to speak their thoughts. Wahrend had expected that it would come to this, and he had steeled the humanity of his nature to suit the severity of the occasion. His disposition "was gentle, but not fearful;" and the effort on his side had been, not to find the courage necessary to the encounter, but to banish from his heart those really honourable feelings that whispered their repugnance to the forceful mode about to be adopted. Had a rightful demand been made, he would have been as ready as Marcus Curtius to leap the gulf that yawned destruction, or as Leonidas to throw himself on the pointed spears of an innumerous foe. But it was with the very first blush of this pending event that he was dissatisfied. A son of nature, freedom, and the mountains, he had learned better things, and it required a giant effort of his virtuous mind to doff the glorious armour that truth had heretofore lent to it, and to establish in its place the gewgaw panoply that the world calls honour. Not so with De Mara. Ever the world's creature in this, as well as in all other things, he was willing to subscribe to the world's articles of faith. He was a gentleman, a nobleman, and a knight; and any one of these was sufficient to require him to cut a throat according to the decorum prescribed. He had learned bravery by rote, as schoolboys learn Latin, and had found talent enough to be perfect in the part. He could poise his weapon, and give the lunge in full with more skill than any with whom he had yet crossed foil or rapier. He was proud of the accomplishment. He knew that it gave him the mastery over ninety-nine out of every hundred of those to whom chance might oppose him, and he was a brave man accordingly. The thing came to him of course. He had had such affairs on his hands before; and though he had never yet been so absolutely fortunate as to kill his man, he had always come out of these encounters with amazing éclat. With these sentiments for his general groundwork, he also had his peculiar ones for the existing occasion. The words of Wahrend had penetrated deeper into his soul than would have been supposed by the manner in which he had received them when uttered. Madeline had made him her confidant. She had complained to him of the wrongs she had received. She had told

him of the insult that had been offered to her. All this was bad enough; but how tenfold worse remained behind, and was laid open to his knowledge, when the Swiss affirmed that it was by Madeline he had been sent to demand this explanation!—that it was she who had constituted him her champion!—and that it was under her instruction that he had dared to come to his very abode to beard him for his conduct towards her. These were the thoughts that rankled in De Mara's breast. These were the thoughts that stung him to fierce revenge; and a thousand times almost in one minute did he swear to himself that Wahrend's life should be the forfeit of the pang.

Thus, though they stood in silence awaiting the return of Urfort, the soul of either was not inactive. But of how dreadful a nature was the vein of reflection that coursed its depths! Their thoughts were thoughts of blood, though they tried to belie them by the steadiness of their looks; and they addressed their minds to the same slaughterous theme, which their nerved and rapid arms were in a short minute about to reduce to practice. The breath of the late kind-hearted Wahrend thickened as he lashed his imagination into fit service for the coming scene, while the wily count gave away cunning for ferocity—forgot his prided civilization—and, in spirit, howled to his own soul like a savage. Had their minds been pictured in their outward and observable forms, they might have been taken for two of the figures that blazed on Achilles' shield:—

> "One held a living foe, that freshly bled
> With new-made wounds; another dragg'd a dead."

Urfort's return was the signal for breaking the pause, and putting them again into action. He brought with him three well-tempered blades, which, when unsheathed, shone with smiling surface, as though in mockery of the bloody business on which they were so soon to be employed.

"I believe," said the count, as he took the weapons that were proffered by his attendant, "that you will find them pretty exactly on a par. They are, however, at your service, to take which best fancies you."

Wahrend only bowed in reply as he laid his hand on the one which was nearest to him.

"And now, Urfort, remove those chairs and table into yon corner," continued the count; "and you are to observe that though it is necessary you should be present at what is about to take place, you are on no account to interfere in any way whatever, till called upon both by M. Wahrend and myself, unless one should be wounded and fall. You will take your station so as to see all that passes, but further than that you are to have no share in the proceeding."

"Perhaps it is but reasonable," remarked Wahrend, "to ask your servant whether he would rather decline having even that share in it. It would be pity to force mischief on the poor fellow against his will."

"I am much obliged to your honour," briskly replied Urfort, "but am well content with my office. It is long since I heard the clattering of swords, and it will do my heart good to see their quick motion flaring in the day-light."

The count gave his attendant a look that was intended to silence him; but Urfort either did not or would not regard the token. "The only thing," continued he, "that I am afraid of is, lest the terrible clatter of the steel should reach any of the sharp ears in the hotel, and so the sport should be spoiled. I should be ready to die were any one to interrupt such noble pastime."

The count looked angry at the observation, as he remarked in reply—

"The room is far removed from the frequented part of the house, and I think we run no such hazard."

"But what if it should happen?" persisted Urfort; "the folks here are so plaguy strict that it would be made a syndic affair of in a twinkling. Now, though the crossing of swords is very pretty pastime, for my own part I rather incline, after all, to the fashion I learned in England—pistols and hair-triggers, with the end of a handkerchief in each gentleman's hand. Pop!—pop!—It is over in a minute, and neither side can complain of delay in the business."

"You are something too forward, sir, with your advice," said the count; "but I trust M. Wahrend will make allowance for the riot-running of an English tongue."

While Wahrend was bowing in acknowledgment of the count's observation, Urfort doggedly repeated, "I say 'pistols for ever!'"

"For myself," said De Mara, "I am well contented with swords: it is a weapon I have always been happy in handling. But if M. Wahrend should prefer the suggestion of our umpire (as I suppose we must call him) I am ready to accede."

"Not at all," replied the Swiss; "one of the boasts of my family is that we are descended from William Tell; and it would be shame indeed, if I were not willing to handle a weapon, which, next to his bow, that honoured patriot esteemed as his most potent friend."

"Well," said Urfort, "if it must be swords, it must. And now, gentlemen, I believe you may proceed: the furniture is well out of the way."

"What want you with that footstool?" demanded the count.

"That I retain for my own elevation," answered Urfort: "by standing on it I shall be able to keep a more watchful eye on the event, and know better when to discharge my humble office."

Again a silence, dead and profound, ensued. The combatants for a moment resigned their weapons, that they might strip to a freer action of their muscles:—but this without a word:—

"They ended parle, and both addressed to fight."

It was but the work of a minute:—that elapsed, the twain with limbs firm-set, and all their corporeal powers braced to the feat, met face to face. They poised their tempered weapons high in air: with rapid moving foot they tried their standing; with bright and judging eye they measured each the other's length and motion. This in silence—Then their rapiers met. It was the first sound to break the stillness of the scene; and humanity might have wept at the thought, that those jarring swords were sounding the ruthless knell of a human life.

While thus the antagonists, Urfort with cunning gaze took cognisance of the points displayed on either side. He watched their preparatory doings with the coolness of an automaton, and the judgment of a fencing-master; and it was not till the clash of the first meeting of their swords reached his ear, that he warmed upon the subject.

The first onset was cool, and delivered on both sides with consummate judgment. It almost appeared as if each was master of the intention of the other, before it was put in execution, and had prepared a countermove to resist the fatal purpose that winged each passage of the weapon. Had the stake for which these skilful handlers played been less deadly, it might have joyed the heart to note the expressive grace and design of each movement that ensued as the play grew hotter and more fierce. The Frenchman moved with lightness from position to position, and with each movement varied his general posture, till he should find that which would take his opponent unawares: he pressed forward—then warily retreated—awaiting the looked-for opening. Wahrend, meanwhile, with eyes as

quick in speed as the arrow of his far-famed ancestor, changed as the other changed, and ever presented a cautious front to his opponent. His arm seemed firm and steady as an iron frame, while his wrist gave ever-varying motion to his sword. The count had intended to play a deep and artful part, concealing the better portion of his skill, till he saw some irresistible opportunity, on which he might throw in a vigorous lunge, and at one thrust close the event of the day. But Wahrend's admirable play soon told him that the thought was vain, and he found that he was too well matched to allow his keeping any of his method in reserve.

Thus, for awhile, the battle went; and Urfort, who had nothing to do with humanity, was excited even to laughter as the eager blades flashed and re-flashed before his watchful eyes. His position, which had at first been stationary, seemed too quiescent to suit the humour of his feelings. Gradually he was worked into action, in response to their more rapid movements, till the narrow footstool, on which he had placed himself, became too small a surface to contain him. He descended from his station: anon, he was there again. He shifted attitudes as they below him shifted. He clenched his iron fist, as though he himself were clutching the sword of death, and about to thrust it at some imaginary foe. On and on this went, till at length his excited feelings burst forth in involuntary exclamations—"By Heaven, a noble thrust!" he cried, as De Mara trailed the weapon of the Swiss from its bearing, and in quick recovery lunged his own for the heart. "And as nobly parried too!" he added, when Wahrend, with recovery not less rapid than his foe's, beat off the home-thrust, which had it reached its destination, would never have needed a fellow to finish the work begun. "Glorious business, by St. Paul!" again exclaimed the umpire, as he watched the clashing weapons cross and recross in swift collision.—"It only wants some blood-letting to give prime honour to the matter.

But a change was now perceivable in the current of the fight, which gave Urfort other employment than that of passing comments on the action, and on which the crisis of the day depended. De Mara, who had put forth his best skill and power in assaulting his opponent, began to exhibit signs of the first freshness of his attack wearing away. Urfort perceived it; and the Swiss perceived it too. Hitherto the play of the latter had been comparatively on the defensive; but he now saw his advantage, and he determined that the opportunity should not be thrown away. With fire in his eye, and the fierce pressure of a giant's strength in his motions, he chased De Mara from side to side, accompanying each move with desperate but well-regulated lunges. The count played his part in answer well. He parried the sword's point each time it was presented to his bosom; but found in this too much employment to be able to retaliate with equal vigour. Wahrend observed his condition, and, in proportion as the difficulty increased, parted with his defence, and added to his attack. The cause and the effect went hand in hand. The more the count was pressed, the more he found it obligatory upon him to attend only to the parrying of the thrusts, which Wahrend advanced with threefold fury. The vigour of the nobleman's arm by degrees became too relaxed to repel the severity of the efforts which his antagonist was making, and he was forced to endeavour to supply the deficiency by continually shifting his ground, and retreating before the assault. This, however, was but a temporary expedient, and Wahrend well knew how to turn it to his more certain advantage. The more De Mara retired, the more hotly he pressed upon him; and at length, observing his opportunity, with one right-governed lunge he forced him into a corner of the room, where he had to fight against such odds, that another minute would have put him at the mercy of the Swiss.

The strongest tide of human affairs has sometimes been turned in less than that space of time. Urfort, who had watched with intense anxiety

the scene that has just been described, saw in a moment the difficuly that would involve his patron if he were once entangled in the corner, whither it was evidently the Swiss' object to force him. He had hoped and hoped that De Mara, aware of his danger, had still some cunning shift in reserve, by which at the last moment he proposed to disengage himself from the peril that threatened; but hope was at an end when he saw his back fairly wedged into the angle of the room, with scarcely space enough for the half-play of his sword-arm. Hope is at an end from De Mara's own exertions, and unless some other can help him, Wahrend is in the act of making the last fatal lunge that must beat his opponent's weapon from its guard, and lodge its own point deep in his bosom. His foot is placed ;—his arm is nerved ;—the thrust is making. But as he presses to the rush, he stumbles—reels. The count dashes forward from his imminent position; and at the same moment drives his eager blade deep through the bosom of the Swiss—ay, to his very heart the weapon strains.

Wahrend, who, as the count's last lunge reached him, was recovering his balance, is again shaken from his centre. For a moment he struggles—then falls with heavy burthen to the ground on the very spot were his foot first stumbled. What is it that pillows his sinking head?—the umpire's foot-stool!—Urfort's stage from which he had elected to see the contest!

The eyes of the wounded Swiss, though death is making quick ravage of his vital spirit, glare upon Urfort and the count, and seem to ask, "How came that stumbling-block in such a place?" They understand the appeal, and the count's face sickens in its hue as the disgraceful conjecture flits across his mind, while Urfort chuckles to a demoniac tune in answer to the heart-heaved groan of Wahrend.

It is at this moment that the door opens, and Albert rushes in. A glance is enough—he sees where De Mara stands in fearful admiration of the deed his hand has committed—he sees where Wahrend, the friend of his youth and happiest hours, lies bleeding away his life.

"Wahrend! my Wahrend!" cries the orphan, as he hurries to his side, "open your eyes, and know your faithful Albert."

The eyes of the Swiss were obedient to the summons. They opened, and their gaze was fixed on him who had spoken. For a moment they knew him not, for the thick film hung on their surface, and robbed them of their clarity; but, a moment after, and the dying man recognised the kindly stooping form that tendered him to the death.

"Is it you, then, my Albert?" murmured he; "Heaven be my witness that this half-dead heart thanks you for this last and best of kindnesses."

"Oh, Wahrend—"

"Hush!—do not speak, for 'tis mine to take advantage of the single moment that remains. Your sister, Albert!—your sister!—Have mercy upon her! Tell her this sad tale with tenderness. Tell her not that treachery has been rife with me. Tell her not that that which now supports my head was falsely intruded on my action, and tripped me to my ruin. Tell her not these things; but in their place, and above all other, tell her that I die with her image deeply and purely graven on my heart, and that each pursuit of this final day has been dedicated to her service. Tell her that with my last breath I confirm that which I said in writing an hour ago. Tell her that she has ever commanded my life—that it is for her dear sake I now yield myself—to death!"

These were his words—his very last; for even as they were uttered, his clay-dim eyes were lifted to heaven: a slight shudder spoke the end of mortality, and his noble spirit passed away.

Albert listened a moment, as if in the expectation that there might yet be another farewell to be pronounced; and then, with the certainty of his

friend's death gnawing at his heart, he turned to the spot where De Mara and his associate were standing—frozen, as it seemed, with horror.

"Monsters!" cried he, with indignation high in his eyes, "look upon your work of this day! Look upon the noblest, kindest creature that ever graced humanity! Look, look, and shudder! But think not to escape in your wickedness. His voice impeached you, and mine shall make the city ring with your guilt. Tremble, foul blots, that wreak disgrace on the species to which you belong, for I will this instant denounce you to the law: this instant will I proclaim to speedy justice the detestable crime you have committed."

These words were uttered in a hurried accent, and on the deep feeling of the moment; and as he concluded them, he rushed from the room.

"Urfort!—Villain!" cried the count, the instant he was gone: "how came that footstool between me and my adversary?"

"Nay, how can I tell, my noble patron? But, doubtless, it must have been your good genius who conjured it there; for without it, by my troth, your life was not worth a Birmingham shilling!"

"Devil in disguise of man!" replied the count; "you were my evil genius that placed it there, and, by the act, more deeply wounded my honour than yon body was pierced by my sword. Oh, Wahrend! I was your enemy and deadly foe; but, if ever there was faith in man, there is faith in me, when I declare, that ten thousand times rather would I have knelt—ay, knelt to your mercy—than be the instrument of so foul a construction as this."

Scarcely had the nobleman finished these words, when the loud roll of a drum burst upon the air; and each peal, as it was executed, seemed to approach nearer and nearer to the hotel.

"Hark!" cried Urfort; "it is the city guard; and that young puler has put them on the alert. Fool that I was to let him go! but there is, and ever has been, something in the thoughts he conjures in my mind, that holds back my more prudent resolutions. Count, there is not a moment to lose. We must e'en fly for it."

"I fly not," replied De Mara, haughtily.

"Nay, nay, the thing is very pretty in theory, but it will never do in practice. A moment more, and we shall be on our way to the dungeons of Geneva."

"Better that, than fly to be dishonoured."

"My good lord, I swear, by all that is good and great, that the whole was purely accidental. Give me but the opportunity to explain it, and you shall be convinced. Besides, remember Madeline. I would pledge a thousand lives, if I had them, that she will love you all the better for this;—that the very crisis is come when she will yield on any terms;— and is this a moment to throw yourself into the arms of fellows with bayonets and mustachios, when the finest woman in the world is on the point of throwing herself into yours?"

"But how are we to meet? I dare not venture to her."

"I will undertake for every thing, if you will but act under my guidance. Hark! the drum again! Come, let us make our retreat by the back door, and make the best of our way to Kobolt's. There, I warrant, we may lie snug enough, in spite of the sharp scent and piercing eyes of the searchers of Geneva."

De Mara, who had been roused to attention by the words which Urfort had so skilfully supplied about his mistress, and who was willing to hear any thing that could show that the fatal termination of his conflict with Wahrend had arisen from accident, and not from design, yielded to the directions of his guide; and they were speedily tracking their way through obscure streets and winding lanes, with all of which Urfort appeared to be

not a little familiar, towards the abode of Kobolt, where the latter did not doubt that they might lie safely concealed, in spite of the best exertions of the police of the city to discover their retreat.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
And Tybalt's dead, that would have kill'd my husband:
And this is comfort: wherefore weep I then?
Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,
That murther'd me: I would forget it, fain;
But, oh! it presses to my memory,
Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds;
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished!
That *banished*, that one word—*banished*,
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.—ROMEO AND JULIET.

THERE can be no doubt that, when Albert quitted the presence of De Mara and Urfort, his firm intention was to act according to the words he had uttered; and, had he waited long enough at the hotel to hear the roll of the city drum, it would have been the signal for his denouncing the destroyers of his friend. The rapidity of his pace, however, had far removed him from the vicinity of the street long before the drum was heard echoing along its line; and he seemed, by the rate at which he passed, to be seeking relief from the dreary load of thought that was pressing upon his imagination.

His first thoughts still were dedicated to his friend. The wind, as it drove past him, seemed to sweep to his ear the murmurs of the dying man; the last groan of the expiring Swiss was echoed back again and again to his morbid fancy; and "revenge upon my murderers" was whispered to his disturbed senses, in the well-known voice of Wahrend.

But ere he had an opportunity of obeying the dictate, other thoughts presented themselves to his mind. Justice does not content itself with the parcel statement of one man, but demands a universal exposition of the first and the last event connected with that which demands its interference. How, then, could he tell of Wahrend's fate without implicating his sister? How could he denounce the evil-doers that had worked his death, without declaring the share that Madeline had had in that very death? In these questions there was dreadful agony; and well might they palsy his determination of seeking justice against the monsters who had awarded death to his devoted friend.

But if he could have seen the condition of his sister whilst he was thus holding parley with himself, how much more agony would there have been in the questions! He had left her in a state bordering upon insensibility, when in obedience to her entreaty he had gone to seek those between whom the conflict was raging. Happy would it have been for her had that oblivion of the senses continued, and had excluded from her seething brain the recollection of the things that had been, and the imagining of the things that might be! But high destiny would not permit her to escape so easily. She awoke again to life, and with that awakening came all the consciousness of the thousand springs of misery that had overwhelmed her better reason, and made her the merest creature of impulse that was ever driven this way or that by the guests of passion.

She awoke, and the first object that met her fevered gaze was Wahrend's

letter. That alone was sufficient to recall her in a moment to all that had gone before; and she cried aloud for Albert. Each moment seemed an age—each thought an eternity; and she knew not how to contain the eager, troublous, sickening panting of her soul to know all—the worst—the best—at one immediate grasp.

On and on her passion-fed impulse led her, until every thing else was absorbed in the one consideration of the danger of De Mara. The consciousness of that danger restored his image to her heart in all its pristine tenderness; his barbarity and neglect vanished before the idea that at that very moment perhaps his life's thread was trembling beneath the shears of Atropos. That one sole thought embraced her every faculty. She forgot that it was by Wahrend he was threatened: she forgot that she had despatched her brother to prevent or bring her earliest news of the result. She could only figure to her diseased imagination that there was some appalling, horrid peril besetting the chosen of her heart, and that the whole course of her destiny was involved in that conclusion. Why then did she pause? Why was she there in inactivity, when so dreadful a deed was enacting? "Up, up, Madeline!" she shouted to herself; "rush to the thickest of the danger; and if De Mara must die, show that you can die with him!"

There was a sort of horrible gratification in the thought that these words inspired. It would at least take her from the agonizing condition of suspense in which she sat enthralled. It would put her again in motion. It would tempt her into action, and hurry her from the still horror that lent so ghastly a hue to the uncertainty that enshrouded her. There was something like resistance in this new resolution that had seized her; and resistance was more desirable than the present passive endurance which placed her at the mercy of the most afflictive sensations.

Full of this feeling, she started up to seek the count. With nervous and unsteady step she descended to the street. The door was opened; and with something which could hardly be called a purpose offering itself to her inconclusive mind, she passed the threshold, and was ready to launch herself, even in her present most deplorable condition, into a world little fit to understand the feelings that agitated her.

But at this very moment Albert approached the house. He saw the action of his sister—guessed its intention—and hurried to her side. The sight of her brother recalled to her memory the errand on which he had been sped, and she gave him a look that asked a thousand questions at once.

The only answer that Albert afforded her was to take her by the hand, and conduct her back to the apartment which she had just quitted; she obeying his movement with the facility of a child in leading-strings. Her look still inquired: her attitude was still that of a person willing to listen to the minutest sound; but she uttered no word—she asked no question.

Albert too was silent, for he knew not how to address his sister on the subject of the scene he had just come from witnessing. No suspicion of the giving way of his sister's intellect had passed across his mind; and he had, therefore, received all her observations as the pure and unsophisticated expressions of her feelings. And to what did those observations seem to tend? She had expressed hatred for De Mara—she had expressed regard for Wahrend. She had dwelt no less on the goodness, the kindness, the warm-heartedness of the latter, than she had appeared to loathe the very name of the former. To a certain extent Albert had all his life been labouring under a mistake as to the nature of her feelings towards the Swiss. Before the consummate skill of Valdi had bestowed the sense of hearing on him, while yet at Unwalden, and with little knowledge of the world for his guide, he had not been competent to form a judgment on the character of the acquaintanceship between his sister and Wahrend. He

had seen them continually together; he had observed that they sought each other's society; and the natural conclusion of his boyish mind was that Madeline had an affection and a kindness of regard towards her companion. But to whatever that had amounted, Albert had been fully sensible that while De Mara's sun was in the zenith, Wahrend's star was under an eclipse. But it was in judging of the events that had taken place since the re-appearance of his friend that he had made his grand mistake. The count from that period had been in disgrace, while the Swiss on the other hand had been received with comparative favour. It was true that that favour had so far declined as to induce Wahrend to seek a final explanation with his mistress; but equally true was it that on that very interview he had been received into sufficient confidence to be elected Madeline's champion and the messenger of her indignation to the Frenchman.

This was the train of argument that Albert had suggested to his mind, when the circumstances of the day had compelled him to quit his more favourite themes of thought for the purpose of interfering in the situations, which Wahrend first, and subsequently Madeline, had laid before him: and the consequence of the conclusions to which he had come was a firm belief in his mind that Madeline's real affections were wrapped up in the Swiss, and that it was for his sake that she had displayed all that eagerness and anxiety to induce her brother to seek the parties, and avert the threatened mischief. Albert had the more readily adopted this suggestion, because it was in accordance with his own feelings; and when a picture presents two points of view, we naturally adopt that which is most in harmony with our creed and perceptions.

With these sentiments strongly pressing on the imagination of the youth, the silence which he observed towards his sister on his return need be no matter of wonder. It was on Wahrend that she had bestowed her heart, it was to save him that she had called on her brother in the hour of peril; and the only answer that he was now able to make to that call would come in confirmation of her worst fears—to the destruction of the last glimpse of hope that might yet be extant in her bosom.

The expression of Albert's features, however, told Madeline the feelings of his soul, for it spoke horror and dismay. His feelings had not yet recovered from the shock they had experienced on first bursting into the room where his friend lay extended in the agonies of death; and these feelings were painted in his countenance in fearful colours. It was this that made the sister preserve the silence that Albert seemed to have prescribed; for she two well interpreted the meaning of his countenance not to imagine that the disclosure, which as yet lay beneath, would, when made clear and express, break upon her alarmed senses with the awful terror of a thunderbolt.

But this could only endure for awhile. Madeline's soul was made of impatience; and she had ever been more sensitive to the infliction of suspense than of execution. "Brother," at length cried she, "tell the whole in a word. Your look informs that a dreadful fate has attended on the strife: but, in the name of every holy thing, make not the present evil worse by adding the torture of delay which conjures to my mind things perchance more horrible than the reality itself."

"What am I to say, my sister?" replied Albert.—"What is the task you require at my hands?"

"A word, a single word!" vehemently exclaimed Madeline. "In one word tell me the fortune of the day."

Albert shook his head mournfully. "I dare not," whispered he.

"Dare not! Then let conviction do its worst; for not even phrenzy can conjure aught so dreadful as that which trembles on your lips for utterance, and unmans you ere you give it sound."

Another pause ensued—Albert afraid to speak, and the sister so im-

mersed in the depth of her fears that for a minute she forgot the presence of her brother. But presently her eye was fixed upon him, and she exclaimed—almost screamed—"I must be told all:—I must know it to the minutest incident! for this is my act: I was its evil author, and already do I feel it imposing a withering and irrevocable curse upon my heart. Speak out, thou messenger of blood! Tell me how he died!—not why—for that, O God!—O God!—I know too well."

"He died," returned Albert, in a voice almost choked with feeling—"he died with your name last upon his lips, bequeathing kindness and blessings."

"Then he is dead!—But, no—I will not believe it! Awhile ago, he was in health, for Urfort spoke not of illness;—then where should death have found a passage to creep in?"

"At the sword's point of his ruthless foe. There entered death, full and at once, nor needed the customary show of sickness or disease to forerun his march."

"Still my poor heart refuses to give credence. Why should he be dead, and leave me living? He was noble, admirable, and gallant; and I but a worm of the world in the comparison. Yet I have heard that death ever delights to prey on the more exalted victim."

"My sister—"

"Call me not sister! Let me be kin to none. I am a monster unutterable, and the finger of scorn shall hunt me to my grave, and write the epitaph on my mouldering bones. Alas! I thought that he had injured me; and now I find 'twas I that injured him. I was the fell sorceress that plotted his most hateful destruction; and he rewarded the sin with his dying blessing—ay, ay, a blessing, indeed, it will be. I will go sit by his corpse, that the gaping wound shall bleed afresh, and that my cruel heart may indulge in its wickedness to the last, and revel in perceiving how the noblest life the world could boast has been spent to gratify its miserable spleen."

Albert would again have spoken, though his mind was in that state of perturbation that he could hardly measure the words that would have departed from his lips, when the door opened, and a stranger entered. He walked up to the spot where the youth was standing, and said stiffly, but not uncivilly, "I believe, sir, your name is Albert Schvolen?"

He, who was thus questioned, almost mechanically replied, "It is."

"You will excuse the nature of the errand on which I come," continued the other; "but, as an officer of the city guard, it is my duty to require your immediate attendance before the syndics. I am just come from the Count de Mara's hotel, and find that he has fled, leaving the corpse of the unfortunate M. Wahrend without——"

What further the officer was about to say was interrupted by Madeline, who, with a hysteric scream, exclaimed—"De Mara alive! De Mara not dead!—O, say those blessed words again! Speak them once more, and save me from the fearful doubt that it was my own deceitful imagination that coined the words, to cozen me with an empty nothing."

"I am sorry, madam," returned the officer, "that it should be any wise gratifying to you to hear that the count De Mara has fled from the hands of justice, leaving his antagonist a corpse. The fact, however, is indisputable: I saw the latter with my own eyes, and the landlord of the hotel pledged himself to the former."

"Then I am happy, indeed!—and this man, who calls himself my brother, is foiled in his cruel attempt to persuade me that the count was killed."

"I, Madeline!" cried Albert; "I attempt to persuade you that the count was dead! Alas! I knew too well that poor Wahrend was the victim; for I myself received his dying words."

"I am glad to hear you say that, sir," interrupted the officer; "for it will

make you a most useful witness. I must trouble you to accompany me."

"If," replied Albert, "you will be so good as to wait one minute below, while I speak a few words to my sister, I will then attend you to whatever place you may think necessary."

The officer bowed in reply to this request, and showed his acquiescence in it by quitting the apartment.

"My sister, what means this?" demanded Albert, as soon as the stranger had withdrawn. "A minute before this man entered, you were, with me, deploring Wahrend's unhappy death; and now, because you hear that De Mara has escaped, the whole tone of your voice has changed, and you bring an accusation against me, the foundation of which is beyond even the wit of man to discover."

"Albert!--Albert!—add not dissimulation to the cruelty that you have already practised on your sister's heart: your words told me that the count was dead, and that Wahrend lived."

"Would that I could have told you that! Would that the count had died a thousand deaths, so that the brave and generous Wahrend had been spared!"

"I understand you," exclaimed Madeline; "you have failed in deceiving me, and now you go to denounce De Mara, who, in his own defence, slew the Swiss."

"Slew the Swiss!—and is that your only tribute to the man who has died in protecting you from the base affronts which De Mara heaped upon you?"

"I know of no affronts! The words you utter strike on some ancient chord too loose and ineffectual to vibrate to the appeal. What De Mara was is all forgotten. I only know him NOW—an injured man—plotted against—decoyed;—and I the wicked instrument of all this fell design."

"Madeline, Madeline!" cried the youth, "what means this fearful change? Do you not remember his cruel acting at the ball? Do you not remember his treacherous introduction of Mademoiselle Basault, to harass your soul to the very verge of ruin? Do you not remember his neglect?—his contumely? Do you not remember your own commission to Wahrend?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed she with vehemence; "that I do remember! The rest has passed away and well-nigh left my memory a blank; but that fell commission still has place within my soul; wicked, wicked monster that I was to plot against so dear a life!"

"A most dear life has, indeed, been plotted against—and to the most fatal consummation. Oh, Wahrend, Wahrend, let not thy fled spirit look this way, for if it has aught of mortality yet remaining, deeply will it writhe to witness this bitter return for the dearest love that man ever bore to woman."

"Wahrend!" cried the agitated girl; "what of him? Ay, now I remember;—and here—here are tears."

"Give them to his memory, for he has wept tears of blood for you."

"I would; but something goes across my half-forgetful brain, to which my tears seem still more consecrate. I will go seek De Mara, and he shall change my grief to joyous smiles."

"That share of guilt," cried Albert, "is at least prevented. The murderer has fled—De Mara will be sought for in vain."

Madeline screamed aloud as her brother spoke these words. "Now flow, tears! break, heart! burst, every sense of feeling and of passion!" she exclaimed; "for cause enough there is for all of you! De Mara fled, and Madeline desolate! Let him, who can, add a new torture to that one doom of fate."

"Of whom speak you these things?"

"Albert, let not another word pass your lips. 'Tis time to act; for too long have you dallied—too deeply have you wounded your sister's heart with miserable delay. Heretofore, I have entreated—now I command!"

"Sister——"

"Silence! I say; for I will have nought but deeds—ay, by deeds have suffered, and by deeds will I answer. You are my only companion;—you have ever pretended to my best affections. Well! I will tell you how to win them for an eternity. Go forth, and seek the runaway. Search the universal world, till you have found his retreat."

"Should I do so," said Albert, "it would be to deliver him into the hands of justice."

"Ay, to my justice," interrupted Madeline, "and you shall be the executioner. He must be found, Albert;—he must be hunted to some corner, where no escape is possible. And then—the change of souls!—oh, shake not your head; for even though you could shake rocks and firm-set mountains with like facility, my resolution you could not shake. No word, I say, no word!—I pray not—I entreat not—I petition not:—but I command. See you that it be done. This night I give you for the search; but to-morrow's sun will set in dreadful blood, if my ordaining be not accomplished."

These strange mad words that spoke her palsied intellect were uttered with fearful vehemence; and her couuntenance was in terrible accordance with the sentence they pronounced. Ere Albert could reply, she fled the room, muttering as she went—"To-morrow! Remember to-morrow!"

Albert's was a dreadful situation. The sister, to whom his affections had heretofore been knitted as intimately as life to his own pulses, had threatened him with strange and undiscoverable designs that must bring in their train all that was most horrible and destroying. What was it that she intended?—what dark and afflictive deed was it at which she had hinted, whereby to consummate to-morrow's disappointment? Her language was frightful—her manner terrible; but still more frightful and terrible was the hidden mystery with which she had closed her last words. Had she but told the scheme that fired her brain, his skill might have been taxed to provide an antidote. But what human knowledge could forerun an evil based in obscurity?—threatened, but not devolved? Her command was upon him to seek De Mara; that alone was the condition on which she consented to forego her resolution. But how was he to find the delinquent nobleman?—where was he to look for one, who, under Urfort's guidance, would doubtless take such precautions that not even the keen-scented police of the city should be able to trace his steps? It was hopeless—all hopeless and nugatory.

But still something must be done to hinder Madeline's determination, or at least to gain that knowledge of her intention which might enable him to counteract it. It was to this last thought that he more fondly clung, for even should he succeed in finding the Frenchman's retreat, there would follow the dreadful task of employing his dear-prized secret in such a way as to put it at the mercy of him who had earned, by this last act of the death of Wahrend, his most unchangeable abhorrence. Still was his cry—"No, never will I employ the gift of Heaven on the basest of mankind!" The secret still was between him and Madeline. Still should it remain so. And at that moment of thought and resolution the idea with wild rapidity entered his mind, that at length he had found the much-desired means of possessing full knowledge of Madeline's intentions. Her soul his, and his soul hers—and then indeed he might hope to counteract the fatal design that was hovering o'er her brain, waiting still more fatal execution—yes! Transfusion of the Soul should pass between them.

But she had given him but short shrift for consideration:—she might even in her present agitation make that shortness still shorter. There was not a minute to be lost; and that very instant would he seek her chamber, and proceed to the undertaking that was to obtain for him the full possession of her every thought and feeling.

He had already reached the door with this resolution rife in his mind, when he was met on the threshold by the officer of the city guard.

"I am sorry, M. Schvolen," said he, "that it is out of my power to allow you further time. I am momentarily expected by the syndics, and it is as much as my office is worth to delay any longer."

"Only for a quarter of an hour," cried Albert, anxiously—"only for half a quarter of an hour."

"It is impossible, young gentleman," returned the officer: "as long as it was in my power to oblige, I was desirous of doing so; but the latest moment has now arrived, and we must proceed to the hall of justice."

Albert would have again entreated, but he saw by the determined accent and manner of the man that remonstrance was in vain; and therefore, without further remark, he accompanied his *custos* whither he led the way.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Arib. ——We may talk of Heaven,
May gaze with rapture on yon starry regions;
But who shall lend us wings to reach their height?
Impossible!
Seof. There is a way yet left,
And only one.
Arib. Ha! speak!
Seof. Her sudden flight.
Arib. Oh! by what friendly means? Be swift to answer,
Nor waste the precious minutes with delay.

ROWE'S ROYAL CONVERT.

THE pace at which Urfort led his uneasy patron towards Kobolt's dwelling, much resembled that at which the nobleman had last approached the same abode. But the feelings of the count on the present occasion were very different. Then, in spite of all the rebuffs he had recieved from his mistress, he still possessed that gaiety of spirit which was one of the grand characteristics of his disposition; and the excitement of the new features of temper and habit which the stranger just rescued from the water displayed, served to give an air of romance and singularity to the whole adventure. Now, on the contrary, the whole aspect of affairs was sombre and heavy. His rival was slain—slain in a manner which even the count's own odious rules of honour could not justify; and he himself was a flyer from the peril of justice. But however painful this view of the subject might be, De Mara was not a man to allow such sensations to hold too long dominion over him: and had not the past been backed by a question of what the future might yield, he would soon have got over those feelings which we saw displayed in his first angry words to Urfort, after Albert had departed from the apartment of slaughter. But that which was to come seemed to threaten an ominous interference with his passion for Madeline. The vigilance of the police of Geneva, though it had not been able to discover the murderer of Deboos, might be more successful in finding the spot whither he had retreated; and the certain result of that would be his being dragged from it like a criminal to answer for that which he had, indeed, been a criminal. But even supposing he escaped the search of justice, in what manner would Madeline look upon the events of that day? He had no reason to doubt that Wahrend had spoken the truth, when he asserted that it was with the maiden's own consent that he presented himself as the champion of her offended cause; and it therefore seemed more than probable that the feeling (whatever it might be) that had dictated that

course to her, would be infinitely heightened by the failure and death of him whom she had appointed as her defender. It was true that Urfort had treated this matter lightly, and had pledged himself that Madeline should disregard the fatal transaction of the day. But in what respect was Urfort's judgment better than his?—his, which seemed to be supported by nature and common sense, both of which appeared to insist on Madeline's deepest resentment of the painful termination of the conflict which had taken place? But had he ground for believing that Urfort had really given his sincere opinion?—This was a question which had once or twice flitted across his mind during the short period that he had been availing himself of this man's services; and now that there appeared to be nothing but mischief emanating from his councils, it came with tenfold force on De Mara's recollection, and the result was to awaken a strong suspicion that for some reason which he could not divine, (unless it was merely that of securing the promised hundred louis,) the adventurer, whom he had taken into his pay, was leading him on with vain expectations which he himself never hoped to realize.

These were the thoughts that worked their way into the Frenchman's imagination, as he accompanied Urfort in silence through various back ways and obscure windings to the hostel of Kobolt. As they approached, the day began to close upon them; the clouds came up heavy and thick from the southern horizon, and the gathering mists speedily changed into a fast drizzling rain, that drew an air of discomfort and darkness over the face of nature. and was little calculated to improve the feelings which had taken possession of De Mara.

At length they arrived at the well-known porch; and, as the night-hour was but early, obtained more easy ingress than when last they visited the house in company. Kobolt executed one of his best smiles and most hospitable bows when he perceived the entry of the nobleman; but the latter seemed to be in no humour to indulge the open disposition of his host, for he passed on without any notice of the salutation that was so courteously proffered.

Kobolt, however, was not to be so easily rebuffed. "I am afraid," cried he, "that it is destined you are always to come here with a wet jacket; but I believe I can this time supply your honour with a more suitable change of raiment."

"I need none," replied the count, testily; "a corner by your kitchen-fire will soon remedy the damp I feel from the rain."

"Now, that is unlucky," cried Kobolt; "but it is ever the case on a Friday. I have two or three louts in the kitchen over a sheep bargain, and a bottle of the thinnest; and I fear your honour will not like to mix with such clodpoles."

"No, no," hastily returned De Mara, "I would not be seen by any one, for I am in no humour for society just now."

"Had not your honour better step up-stairs and change you apparel, while my wife in the mean time shall light a fire in another room?"

"Let the latter be done as soon as possible," replied the count; "and I will in the interim be content to walk your corridor."

"Kobolt on this called his wife, and gave her the necessary instructions. He himself, however, did not seem in any humour to quit his guests, probably thinking it but civil to warm them with his conversation, till the crackling wood gave token of a more genial heat. After showing the twain up-stairs to the corridor, and watching them pace its antiquated floor for some minutes in utter silence, as if deeply revolving on the foregone or the future, he seemed to think that it was necessary for him to start some subject for conversation; and he therefore said to Urfort, with whom he possibly thought it safer to make the opening than with the more distant

stranger—"Why, how now, old friend of my black corks, is it possible that the weather has so chilled you that you cannot find words for a gossip? For my part, I thought you were proof against wind and rain, and that nothing could stop your tongue."

"The wise man, Master Kobolt," returned Urfort, "knows how to talk n season."

"But yours," replied the host, "I always reckoned to be a tongue for all seasons."

"And yet you have seen me silent enough."

"Never but once, on my fay! and that was when that strange, tall, hectoring-looking woman came here to seek you. Egad! when she found you, you seemed in no great humour to talk to her. By-the-by, Urfort, what has become of that respectable lady? was it she that——"

"I remember nothing about her," interrupted the other, doggedly; "and it would be as well, Master Kobolt, if you would take the hint from your guests, and wait till they speak to you before you speak to them."

"Well, well, man, never be hurt; if I had known that the lady had been a sore subject with you, I would never have mentioned her; though as to forgetting her, that is out of the question; for never, before or since, have I looked upon one of so striking an aspect or so commanding a figure. Why, she seemed to twirl even you round her thumb; and when she told you that you were to go to that madame—madame—what was her name? —and send her on a wild goose errand, the devil knows where, you seemed——"

"For God's sake," cried Urfort, eagerly, "do cease this trash! You are disturbing his honour, and you are disturbing me: the best thing you can do is to go and see if the fire be lighted, for I am sure this place is enough to chill the ardour of the hottest lover that ever cried *peccavi* in July."

Kobolt seemed inclined to say something further, but Urfort almost pushed him from the corridor, as he repeated, "Come, do go, and hurry the good dame. She must have gone to sleep in the chimney-corner instead of making a blaze there."

"What was that fellow talking about?" said De Mara, as soon as Kobolt was gone. "I scarcely listened to what he said, and yet there was something about a female whose description would almost have made me swear that I knew to whom he alluded."

"Nay, I hardly know myself whom he was talking about," replied Urfort; "your knowing landlords think they must always find something to say; and the consequence is that half they speak must be invention. But come, my lord, shall we descend? I think we shall find the room ready by this time."

When they reached the apartment they found that Kobolt's wife had not deserved the reproach which Urfort had insinuated against her, for there was already a fire blazing in the chimney, and the room appeared a paradise when compared with the chilly and darksome corridor which they had just quitted.

For awhile they remained silent. But the count's agent, with his accustomed shrewdness, in part read what was going on in his employer's mind, and he felt that he could not do better than break in upon the train of thinking that was being pursued there, before it obtained that determined character which disinclines him who undergoes it to change it to a totally different bearing.

"Is it not high time," cried he, by way of introducing the conversation which he thought best calculated to serve his interest—"Is it not high time to think of the steps that shall be taken as to Madeline? She should not be left too long to herself."

"I have no vein for the subject," replied the count, moodily; "I have no vein for any thing but to curse the hour when I was fool enough to drag you out of the water."

"Nay, that is your affair, more than it is mine; and therefore you have my leave to curse it as much as you please. But how long is this ceremony of excommunication likely to last?"

"As long as I have memory of the dishonour of which you made me this day the unfortunate instrument."

"Dishonour!" cried Urfort; "why, you ran him through as fairly and as neatly as Orlando Furioso himself could have done."

"Did you not see the man's dying eyes demand—'How came that footstool there?' I ask the same; for it has wounded my honour even more deeply than it wounded his body."

"I thought we had done with that foolish subject. How can I tell how the footstool got there? Perhaps it got there of itself; perhaps my eagerness to be in at the death (though, by-the-by, the death, just then, was likely to be on the wrong side) made me kick it with my foot; and though a footstool will not roll like a snowball, yet a very energetic kick might have sent it even further than this one travelled."

"Oh that it were possible that accident, and not intention——"

"I am sure of it. Why, you do not suppose that I would have done such a thing for the purpose? I should have had too much respect for your feelings, though, to be sure, they were in danger of being hurt either way."

"Urfort, Urfort, I like not your style. I can easily understand that you concern yourself but little as to the manner in which the Swiss was killed; but I cannot be so callous as you. Life staked against life, I had a right to do my best."

"And very well you did so," interrupted the fellow; "but let us forget this ugly business, for things more desirable ask our observation. Madeline must be seen; and, on one condition, I will undertake the peril."

"Madeline must indeed be seen," echoed De Mara, with a sigh, "though I hardly hope any thing from it. But your condition?"

"Simply this—that I may have the command of another noble regiment of black corks."

"I do not understand you."

"And yet it is plain enough," cried Urfort; "Kobolt will not part with his troops, without certain little shining counters in exchange. I have none to give him; but your bond stands good to me for a hundred. If you will agree to forestall the date, and make the bond prompt payment, I will undertake to see the girl the first thing to-morrow morning."

"By Heaven! I guessed as much," exclaimed the count, in an angry tone; "but I am not yet so blind as not to be able to see through your shallow proposition. You would secure the remainder of your pay; and and then, away flies the bird! No, no, sir; it is not yet quite come to that. I have long suspected that my first hundred louis had been spent in vain; but I shall be careful how I am twice a dupe."

"And do you think that I am to run the risk of being handled by the police of Geneva, without such a trifle as this being conceded?"

"You may spare yourself your powers of oratory. You know the terms of our agreement; and, rely upon it, I will not yield a tittle of them. On the other hand, perform your part of the contract, and I will scrupulously perform mine."

"I shall do no more," cried Urfort, surlily, "without touching the gold."

"Fellow," replied the count, "would to Heaven you had pronounced as much yesterday! then, at least, I should have been free from this dreadful stain upon my conscience. Now, I feel like a guilty thing. I am

afraid to meet the eye of man: I start at each noise, and am ready to conjure every form, every shape, every shadow, into the thing I dread."

At this moment Kobolt entered the apartment, and announced that there was a person inquiring for Urfort and his companion.

"So much for your boasted retreat," cried De Mara; "already are we traced hither; and in another moment I shall be on my way to Geneva like a felon."

His fears, however, were relieved by the person who was making the inquiry entering the room. It was Altoz, who, having heard from the landlord of the count's hotel what had taken place, together with the information that his friend and Urfort had departed together, immediately conjectured that the place of their retreat would, in the first instance, be Kobolt's retired dwelling; and he had accordingly followed them thither with all speed.

"My friend," cried the count, the moment he recognised him, "this is kind indeed. I have had dreadful thoughts since I parted with you this morning; and the worst was, that the time was come when I was about to be deserted by all those whom my heart held dear."

"Then, my dear count," returned the chevalier, "you must have been thinking of yourself, not me. Your silly pursuit of this girl made you desert us; but we never deserted you even in those days of neglect. Why, then, should you think that now, when you have begun again to show yourself a man, your friends were likely to forsake you?"

"Altoz, Altoz, know you what has taken place?"

"To be sure I do. I went in search of you to your hotel, when Granski, told me all that had happened. While I was there the police came in, so that I was not a little pleased to learn that you had made a safe retreat; and as I was told who your companion was, I easily guessed where you had taken up your quarters."

"But you heard not how he fell?"

"I could not well hear that, for, as I understood, no third person was present but Urfort. Tush, man! never look so sad: it was certainly a little awkward that no one but your own servant was present; but the thing will blow over after a three day's bustle, and the character of De Mara will stand even higher than before."

"Think you so?" cried the count, anxiously.

"It cannot be otherwise. Besides, what matters it what the puritans of Geneva may think about the affair? You never intended making that place your home, and the gayer world of Paris will give you credit for the adventure."

"That is exactly what I have been endeavouring to force upon my noble patron," cried Urfort, "and I am glad to be so ably backed. Why, after all, nothing has happened but the pure fortune of war. Once or twice I thought it would be the count who would have to lie still, and M. Wahrend to fly. Well, then, it changed again, and at length a lucky lunge settled the affair. Were my patron's chance mine, I should think myself well out of the scrape, for the Swiss had a gallant thrust, and lunged with as short an interval as it was ever my fortune to witness."

"I am glad to hear you bear testimony to the Switzer's skill and the continuance of the combat," exclaimed the chevalier, "for both those points will weigh much in favour of the count, should he be unfortunate enough to fall within the clutch of the busy meddlers of this city. But at present, thank Heaven, he is snugly hid in a corner where no one would dream of searching for him. So, come, De Mara, throw this melancholy to the dogs: let us discuss matters over a bottle of the best, and drown reflection in the depth of our beakers."

The count, though he longed to tell his friend the whole of the particu-

lars of the conflict, whence arose his uneasiness, could not nerve himself to the task: besides which, he was still trying to hope that, in spite of Urfort's sneering manner, the false step of Wahrend had really originated in an accident; and he was, therefore, unwilling to lay too great a stress upon the circumstance that had so unceasingly harrassed his mind since the death of the Swiss.

"Your proposal," cried Urfort, "is just to my taste, and I have no doubt that ere long we shall bring his lordship to the same way of thinking. Besides, I have a word or two to say about the little mischief-maker that has made all this confusion; and I calculate that the wisest counsellor we can call to our aid is a batch of Kobolt's black corks. Under permission, I will make bold to order them into the presence;"—and with these words, he went forth to seek his host.

"Altoz," said De Mara, as soon as he was gone, "I like not that fellow: nay, I am almost becoming superstitious about him, and think that I have met my evil genius in him. He must be got rid of."

"I never supposed," cried the other, "that you proposed keeping him beyond your present need. If he has served that, in the devil's name let him go."

"He has served no good purpose for me; and what I fear is, that the longer I retain him, the more mischief he will effect."

"Is it really the Count de Mara that talks thus? I should have thought that of all men you would have had too much confidence in your own skill and penetration, to fear that one of your tools should transgress the boundary which you have prescribed him."

"I thought so once myself."

"And will again to-morrow. Come, come, you are somewhat agitated by the adventures of to-day."

"But this Urfort hangs over me like a frightful dream."

"Awake from your sleep then, and his power is at an end. You have often favoured me with your advice, now take mine. Press forward the object for which you retained him, and then discharge him with his promised fee, and so close all further connexion with him.—But, hush—he comes!"

"I have ordered a batch of the best," said he of whom they had been talking, as he entered the room, "and in token of my commission bring a handful by way of sample."

"Five bottles are a very tolerable handful, Master Urfort," cried the chevalier: "you must have a pretty notion of a batch if your handful is so bounteous."

"You shall see that anon, when Kobolt comes with his load; and in the mean time allow me to propose you a toast—'Mademoiselle Schvolen, and a speedy meeting between her and the count.'"

"Ay, ay," cried De Mara, "the thing sounds well enough as a toast; but how is the fact to be accomplished?"

"That was just what I was going to explain to you, when we had that slight difference about the hundred louis. I trust you are not inexorable."

"Indeed I am!" answered the nobleman, gravely: "I have had but little return, as yet, for my first hundred."

But if my patron would but condescend to reflect how near he is to gaining all his wishes. Within two days Madeline shall be yours."

"If that be true," replied the count, "I see not why you should be unwilling to wait so short a time for the payment of our contract."

Urfort, with all his cool impudence, hesitated for a moment, as if he could not at once find a reply to so close a corollary upon his own proposition; and, in the mean while, the chevalier took an opportunity of saying—"Come, my fine fellow, I am glad to find that modesty has overtaken

you at last; and, as I love to reward merit, I will pledge myself to add fifty pieces to the count's hundred, provided you do not exceed the two days."

"A bargain!" cried Urfort; and, in good truth, I think it would be but reasonable were the count to add a second fifty; for the plan I have brewing in my brain is one of no little risk to myself."

"And to what does the risk amount?"

"No less than that of daring the penetration of the watch-dogs of Geneva, by undertaking to see Madeline, and giving her some wholesome counsel."

"But what benefit do you expect from such an interview?" asked Altoz.

"Simply, the benefit of inducing the lady to throw herself into the count's arms. Do you think I could not see, from Wahrend's own account of the business, what was the motive that had actuated her?"

"How know you what Wahrend's own account of the business was?" demanded the count.

"Oh! your lordship must excuse me, but I could not help thinking that there was no harm in listening at a key-hole."

Altoz gave the count, who was about to express his indignation, a look as much as to remind him of the advice he had given him when Urfort was absent from the room, and then interfered more openly by remarking—"Pshaw! what have we to do with the delicate expedients by which Urfort gains his intelligence? For Heaven's sake, man, go on with your scheme, or the time will slip by when it can be executed."

"Not that either, chevalier," returned the fellow; "for I do not think we can do any thing till to-morrow."

"Ah, to-morrow again! That is always your cry," said the count; "and I have ever found it a day at which you were never able to arise."

"I never had such hopes before of immediate success," answered Urfort. "It is quite clear that things are now at a crisis; for, though the Swiss was too simple to read her heart aright, I know enough of women to perceive that it was mere desperation at the thought of the count's departure, that induced her to adopt any means that appeared likely to prevent that feared event."

"But even supposing that was the case, the death of Wahrend must have changed her."

"Not a jot! It has confirmed her twenty-strong! The girl was nearly mad at the thought of your quitting Geneva, and a feather might have guided her. But when she now finds that your encounter with the Swiss has actually made you depart the city, the mere thought of meeting you elsewhere will be hailed by her like a vision from Heaven."

"Would that I could be sure of that!" cried De Mara; "but I fear that Albert will have been beforehand with us, and imbued her mind with such a series of suspicions that to move her from his side will be impossible."

"Do not alarm yourself," said Urfort; "Madeline is a true woman, and will have her will. What we have hitherto wanted is to find a motive sufficiently strong to induce her to quit Geneva. As good luck will have it, that is now ready-made to our hands; and I will consent to sacrifice my hundred and fifty louis (will your lordship allow me to say—my two hundred louis?) if she be not on my first hint willing to pursue you to any place you may be pleased to name. The blood is up within her, and has stolen a march upon her reason. What the deuce, then, have we to do with logic and argument, when the principle by which she is actuated is that which sets aside both the one and the other?"

"I think," said Altoz, who had attentively been weighing all that had been said—"I think that there is much justice in Urfort's position;—and the more, because it elucidates satisfactorily the motive that induced her to make Wahrend her confidant."

De Mara shook his head, as he cried, "Even allowing that that is true, it is not yet shown that the feeling is strong enough within her to resist the machinations that my arch-foe, her brother, will raise to clog my motions, I like not this scheme, and yet cannot propose aught else to take its place; —for, how it is I know not, some foul and nameless thing seems to sit upon my brain, and to bear down each effort that I make to free myself from its painful influence."

"Gently, gently!" exclaimed the chevalier. "Now you talk of schemes, I think I have hit upon one that is certain of persuading her to quit Geneva."

"No scheme is wanting," cried Urfort, testily, "but the assurance that it will lead her to the spot where the count is to be found."

"Be not too obstinate, Master Urfort!" said Altoz; "my project is quite compatible with yours, and the two may go hand in hand."

"Come—the plan, the plan?" exclaimed De Mara, impatiently.

"You remember," continued his friend, in obedience to the call; "you remember the motive that first induced her to quit Unwalden, and equally well you must remember the eagerness with which she embraced our offer at the road-side inn to conduct her to Madame Lalande."

"It was that she might recover her lost uncle."

"Exactly so. Now, it seems to me that I might, without any suspicion on her part, send her a note to-morrow morning, or any other time, to say, that having learned by chance that a letter to Madame Lalande was lying at the dead-letter office at Geneva, and as I knew that she was the nearest friend of the deceased lady, I had taken the liberty to procure it from the post-office, and enclose it to her."

"But what is this enclosed letter to intimate? For it is in that, I presume, that the strength of your scheme lies."

"Of course," replied Altoz; "the inclosed letter must purport to be from Seaton, stating, that for particular reasons which should be explained hereafter, he had relented of his obduracy towards the orphans, and was desirous that they should meet him immediately at Unwalden, whither he had gone for that purpose."

"A very fine plan," cried Urfort, contemptuously, "if it were not for two or three fatal objections. In the first place, who is to undertake to write this letter in Seaton's hand-writing?"

"A disguised hand," said the count, who seemed to have adopted the chevalier's scheme at once; "a disguised hand may be mentioned among the things to be explained hereafter."

"And the post-marks?"

"Oh, come; I am glad," said Altoz, "that your objections are becoming so frivolous already. It will be strange, indeed, if a skilful hand cannot be found to imitate them."

"And why is the girl to be sent to Unwalden?" continued Urfort, doggedly; "of all places in the world I should have thought that the worst, for it is the only one where she is known and can find ready protection."

"But, on the other hand," said De Mara, "it is the only one where it is natural for her uncle to send for her. His name, and that of Unwalden, are so associated in her mind, that the very name of the two together will prevent her inquiring too minutely into the other probabilities of the letter. My dear chevalier, I think your plan admirable."

"And I," said Urfort, "think it abominable. It never will go hand in hand with mine."

"Why not?" cried Altoz. "You purpose going to acquaint Madeline with the count's departure: before you get there, my letter will have prepared her for a journey; and all that will remain for you to do (supposing that you have judged her disposition rightly) will be to undertake that De

Mara's course shall lead him to Unwalden; while, on the other hand, if she declines further interview with De Mara, we have in another way insured her journey to Unwalden, whither she may be followed and secured."

"By my hopes of the maiden," exclaimed De Mara, vehemently, "I never before gave my chevalier credit for half so much talent. We will no longer talk of master and scholar, but both be doctors together."

"I am glad to meet with the approbation of so profound a genius," said Altoz with a laugh; "and, now, have you any further commands for me? If not, I will back to the city, and put my scribbling powers to the test in preparation of to-morrow's missive."

"A thousand thanks!" returned De Mara; "I have but one other commission, and that you can perform any time between this and our next interview. I fortunately availed myself of my letters of credit the day before yesterday to their full extent; and you will find in my bed-room a red box studded with nails, which contains the gold I received. This must be secured, or I shall have no means of carrying on the project. I trust to your care to bring it with you to-morrow, in a chaise ready to convey me to Unwalden."

"You may rely on me," said Altoz, "if it be possible to baffle the vigilance of the police."

"I was going to add, that you must get my pistols also; but it will be as well not to tempt their observation too much."

"You can have mine for the journey," replied the chevalier. "I will bring them in the chaise along with the box, if it be possible to get it away from the hotel. If not, you may command such ready money as I have by me. And now—*au revoir!* To-morrow, I trust, will see you in full action, and every thing in train for a successful *dénouement*, with the news that Madeline has the start of you on the road to Unwalden."

CHAPTER XXX.

Damned paper!
Black as the ink that's on thee: senseless bauble!
Art thou a fœdarie for this act, and look'st
So virgin-like without?—CYMBELINE.

URFORT was not at all satisfied with the determination of the count to adopt the chevalier's advice in opposition to his own, for he was one of those who never entertain the slightest doubt of the all-sufficiency of their powers of judgment. He therefore withdrew from the council in no very good humour; and had it not been for the hundred louis, with their promised addition, which tickled him to the task, he would that very night have bidden farewell to Geneva and the count for ever.

"So," quoth he to himself, "this after all is the value set on my judgment and knowledge of the world. The vain Frenchman, not content with having an opinion of his own, must even set the lame-witted conjectures of his friend above me. By Bacchus, if it were not for the gold, without which I am a beggar, I would leave the pair to their precious manœuvres, and, when they found out their folly, only indulge them with a laugh of contempt. Never did I read a character more clearly than that of this girl;—never was a woman more ripe for mischief:—and now the whole is to be baffled and set aside, because, forsooth, this Altoz, in his dotage, must begin to invent as well as his betters. Would to Heaven I could have persuaded the count to have advanced these hundred louis! in

good truth the chevalier should then have had the benefit of his fine scheme all to himself, and I would have marched without drum or fife. But courage, Master Urfort, courage; and see whether you cannot conjure good out of evil. In the first place this ingenious letter-plan may be altogether forestalled, if you can but persuade yourself to rise early enough to be with the girl before the chevalier despatches his missive to her. Good!—that will be good! And perhaps you may be able to pick up a reward for such rising betimes: if a certain red box, studded with nails, could come under your fingering for a minute or two, the trouble would be amply repaid, and the count might take it as a receipt in full for his paltry hundred louis. Well, who knows? Heaven may be bountiful, and an opportunity may come:—at all events, should it arrive, be it your care not to be sleeping the while."

It was in pursuance of these reflections that he was awake before daylight, and prepared to seek the maiden at the earliest moment that there appeared a likelihood of her being visible.

But there was no necessity for his waiting for a seemly hour. To Madeline all hours were the same. It was her sudden re-action from sorrow at the supposed death of De Mara, to joy at her learning that he still lived, that made her so absolute with her brother in requiring his aid. But though this re-action changed the current of her feelings, it in nowise bettered the condition of her mind. On the contrary, it was another earthquake inflicted on the ruin; and the noble edifice of her soul, that so late was rife with beauty, excellence, and virtue, was fast crumbling to decay. Each change of circumstance, whether for good or evil, became more and more irresistible in its effect upon her imagination: her brain swayed beneath the slightest motion, and each moment seemed to threaten it with ultimate destruction. The once-gallant ship floated on the troubled sea little more than a dismal wreck; and it was expectation alone that still held it for awhile together:—the expectation of a good, which, even if it came, would hardly restore her to her pristine vigour, was yet sufficient to hold her mind in trembling balance; but the medicine which it afforded, like laudanum to the body, only yielded a present and fleeting good at the expense of a future and certain evil.

It was this expectation that made her wait with what to her seemed patience—the period she had allowed Albert for the consideration of her proposal. The hours elapsed, but he came not; and she resolved to seek him in his chamber. She went thither, but the place was desolate. Night's dark shades filled the apartment, but no voice of Albert responded to her cry. She sat down upon a corner of the couch; and she felt as if there was something in the thick darkness that enveloped her, that well suited the state of her feelings. De Mara had escaped the search of the police; but was it not possible that he had escaped her also? This was a fearful thought—a thought which, if allowed to grow to perfection, would bring annihilation with it; and with the small relics of strength which were still at her command, she endeavoured to resist its approach: she endeavoured to put in array against it the fact that De Mara was the victor in the field, and that his "charmed life" remained untouched: she brought to her recollection the service she had a right to expect at the hands of Urfort: she tried to persuade herself that there might be some letter or missive from the count delaying on the road. The slenderness of her reason in this situation might almost be called a mercy to her mind; for though these conjectures in opposition to the damning thought of his having deserted her were not adequate to remove it, the frailness of her brain's texture mingled the whole together, and saved her from the utter terror of the latter by diluting it, as it were, with the comfortable suggestions of the former.

Meanwhile the hours crept on, and she and darkness were still acquaint.

She sought not sleep—she remembered not sleep—sleep offered not to approach her eyelids, and her brain had been too much shaken to court his addresses. Day broke upon her, and still found her sitting in Albert's chamber on the very spot which she had first made her resting-place; and it seemed as though her chief anxiety was the avoidance of aught that might disturb the quiescence of her condition. But though her state was outwardly quiescent, things were not at peace within; they had only consented to a sort of armistice, and at the first attack from without they were again ready to start into action: the lack of slumber had also been at the work of mischief, for though her eyes ached not for the want of repose, her whole frame was exhaust, and gave way beneath the absence of that sweet refreshment, which at Nature's command revivifies the sensory of man, and which would have been the most healing balm the maiden's disturbed spirit could have received. It was in this condition that the good woman of the house found her. On passing Madeline's own chamber, she perceived that the door was open, and that its occupant was not there. The orphans had had the art instilled into their bosoms by nature (if such a contradiction in terms may be allowed) of making all who came across their path fall in love with their gentleness of manner and honesty of spirit. The old dame with whom they lived had in an especial degree imbibed the infection; and therefore when she saw that the maiden was not in her apartment, and that the couch presented no signs of having been occupied during the night, she became alarmed, and, as the first resource, hurried to Albert's chamber in the hope of resolving her fears. It was easy to perceive from Madeline's appearance that her usual habits had been infringed; but at the same time her countenance wore an aspect well calculated to induce those who scanned it to forbear questioning the orphan on the subject: in spite of the forced serenity that reigned there, a wildness of the eye and a turbulence of feature were perceptible, which made those who gazed thereon shrink from the task of demanding why those characteristics of a fevered mind were so plainly and so painfully legible. The good dame, therefore, by whom in part these sensations were interpreted, contented herself with endeavouring to persuade the maiden to quit the gloomy chamber, where she seemed enwraped by misery as by a robe, for the purpose of seeking the more cheerful apartment where she had spent so many happy hours. Madeline had had enough of resistance, and felt too severely the pangs that it inflicted, to offer opposition to so unpretending a proposal, though, had she suffered her heart to speak, she might have exclaimed in the words of the man of Uz, "Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery? Why is light given to one whose way is hid?"

But she resisted not. She accepted the guidance of her who persuaded, and followed into the more cheerful apartment. But though she yielded thus far to the good woman's entreaties, it was in vain that the latter attempted to draw her into conversation. A simple "yes," or "no," was the utmost that she could obtain from the maiden, and often in reply to these endeavours, not even so much was afforded by her irreflective mind. She appeared to be involved in dark forebodings of her own; and her companion, at length, in despair at the silence of her manner, withdrew with sorrow for the ineffectiveness of her efforts.

On her descending from Madeline to the floor which was on a level with the street, she found the servant in busy altercation with a pedlar at the door, who, with the voluble pertinacity appertaining to his profession, would receive no denial, but still persisted in being quite sure that there must be some one in the house who would be wanting some article that he could furnish. The servant, in great anger at his unwillingness to take a refusal, was just on the point of shutting the door in his face, when her mistress made her appearance; and the man, gladly availing himself of the oppor-

tunity that presented of another chance for the disposal of some of the contents of his pack, quickly pushed by the servant, and ran through a sort of *catalogue raisonnée* of his wares to the new-comer.

"I have," cried he, with a smirking nod, "every thing and nothing within this little pack;—every thing for my customers, and nothing for those who do not choose to buy. But let me tell you this: only give me a chance of displaying my goods, and the non-buyers will disappear in a twinkling. I have laces more transparent than a new-made spider's web; fans that catch the breeze better than the shaking aspen; true-love knots that can only end with the world; and slippers made after the identical pattern of the one lost by Cinderella at the ball, when she was afraid of her godmother's displeasure. Then I dabble a little in physic, too: I have powder of heart's-ease, for the sorrowful—laughing pills for the melancholy, and a clearing draught for the sad o' conscience. Come, good lady, let me show you some of my wares; or is there no young damsel, whose eyes I could delight for half an hour, whose heart I could quicken, though the weight of Calvin's monument was upon it?"

The last words caught the attention of her who was listening to him. Her simple fancy was awakened to the idea that such babble and display of finery might effect that which she had in vain attempted, and that Madeline might be drawn from the theme that engaged her thoughts by the promised exhibition. It was with this feeling that she cried, "Come this way, my good man, and perhaps I can find you a customer for some of your wares, especially if you will undertake to describe all their good qualities as fully as you have begun."

The pedlar, nothing loth, obeyed the invitation, and, after a sarcastic hint to the servant never in future to be so sure that she knew the tastes of the whole household, was introduced by his conductor into the apartment where Madeline still remained seated, in the very attitude in which she had been left.

"Come, come, Mademoiselle Schvolen," cried the officious female, "here is something to awaken you. I warrant the good man has beauties enough in his bale to make you forget your sorrow."

Madeline bestowed a sort of unconscious look on the speaker, and mournfully shook her head, without saying a word.

"Come, Mr. Pedlar," continued the old dame, "untie your bundle, that we may see whether your goods deserve the fine names you have given them."

"Confound these plaguy knots!" exclaimed the fellow, in reply; "this comes of letting others make up your pack. I shall not be able to undo them in a century. The string must be cut, and I have no knife. Perhaps you can lend me a pair of scissors."

"Now, only to think of a pedlar without a knife! It is like a duck without water. But wait a minute, and I will fetch you what you want." And with these words she went to fulfil her errand.

"Ma'm'selle," exclaimed the man, hastily removing his wig and spectacles, which formed a considerable portion of his disguise, "do you not know me? Do you not know Urfort?"

"Urfort!" cried the maiden, with a shriek; "can it be? Yes, I know the voice. But what means this dress?"

"Surely you must have heard that I and my master are sought for by the city guard, in consequence of what took place yesterday?"

"O Heavens! yes; I know it too well. But tell me—"

"The woman returns. Hush! I must be the pedlar again till you can find means to get rid of her."

"Here, Mr. Pedlar," said the female as she re-entered the room; "here are the scissors; and now to work with them, for I long to see what your promises are good for."

"Good dame," hastily cried Madeline, who was afraid that the fictitious pedlar might have no wares to draw from his seeming pack, "my brother has not yet returned from the summons which he last night received to attend the syndics. I know you love him well enough to share the uneasiness which I feel at his absence. Will you so far prove that love as to seek the reason why he is yet detained?"

"Is it by command of the syndics that he has been prevented coming home?" replied the woman. "Alas! I was afraid that he was again gone on one of his night's rambles, which have broke my heart enough, though I cared not to say any thing about them."

"But will you not seek him, now that I tell you where he is to be found?"

"Ay, marry, that will I; and this instant too, by my troth." And with these words once again the dame left Madeline and the traitor together.

"Now, speak quick, good Urfort," cried the maiden:—"tell me how fares my lord, the count."

"He fares as ill as a wounded heart can make him."

"Ill! said you he was ill? But where bides he? O take me with you, that I may alleviate the sorrow that dwells within his breast."

"That I may hardly venture on; for it is at no small risk that I have come hither. And too well I know that the police have their eye on *your* motions to dare to take you back with me."

"Gracious powers!" exclaimed Madeline, "and is he then to be lost to me for ever?"

"It is to prevent that that I have come thither," cried the other: "this very day the count quits his hiding-place, and proceeds on his journey."

"Then where he goes, there will I follow. It is I that have brought him to this hasty flight; it is I that have caused him to be hunted by thief-takers; and the only reparation that I can offer is to soothe his anxiety, and tend his difficulties. Urfort, I will go with him though his journey take him to the very extremity of the globe."

"So much for Altoz and his doubts!" thought Urfort, as he listened to the eager words of his dupe; and he immediately resolved to precipitate her departure from the city, so as to forestall, if possible, the arrival of the chevalier's cunning missive, which was to perpetrate an object already accomplished.

But even as he was about to urge the necessity of an immediate journey, the undesired communication of the chevalier was brought to Madeline by one of the servants of the house.

"Is it De Mara's writing?" cried the maiden, almost unconsciously, as she received the letter:—"no, no; for why should he write when his messenger has forerun all other expression of his sentiments?"—and with these words she was about to throw the packet aside, as something unworthy of her regard.

"Better and better," thought Urfort; but again his hopes were baffled by the servant observing—"The lad who brought it, Ma'm'selle, said that its contents were of the last importance."

"What can be important," again vaguely exclaimed the orphan;—"what can be important that concerns not the count?" he is one in all, and all in one to this poor heart." And as she thus expressed the singleness of her thoughts, the seal was carelessly broken, and she glanced at the signature of the chevalier.

"Altoz!" cried she, with agitation;—"hateful, hateful name! Ill betide the letter he sends! Mischief wait on the miserable creature who owns him for a correspondent! I will have none of him or his." And as she thus gave way to her disgust, she cast the papers, both inclosure and envelope, with indignation from her.

Urfort gave them a sly glance as they lay rejected on the table, and then

exclaimed, "Poor Monsieur Altoz! and this after he had been priding himself that he was a favourite with Ma'm'selle!"

"Does the kid love the hungry jackal?" cried the excited maiden;—"but, good Urfort, enough and too much of this bad man! The count—whither shall I bend my steps to share his sorrow?"

"His lordship proposes to direct his course towards the interior of Switzerland, as he thinks that those who are in pursuit of him will be less likely to turn their search thitherward. This will take him through Unwalden."

"Unwalden! There then will I meet De Mara. Place of my earliest joys—of my most peaceful recollections;—abode of happiness, serenity, and smiles. Yes, Unwalden! I will make thee ten-fold and twenty-fold more dear to my heart, by making thee the scene of my re-union with him for whom alone my heart yet holds its pulse."

Scarcely had she concluded this asseveration, when their conference was interrupted by the entrance of Albert. His countenance bore the marks of grief; and his eye, in lieu of its wonted buoyancy, crouched ground, wards, as though the weight of his heart had been imparted to the heart's tell-tale: the fine fresh look of humanity, which had heretofore sat triumphant on his brow, was debased; and it appeared as if this fairy creature of affection and romance had deeply drank his first but too sufficing draught of the world's embittering mixture.

"My sister, my sister!" he exclaimed;—"Oh, let me gaze on you, and revive the honest feelings of my nature, for my eyes have been withered—my senses appalled, by the disgusting scenes to which I have been submitted."

He paused, as if waiting to be comforted by the well-known voice of his Madeline; and then, the voice not coming to his expectant ear, he cried, "You speak not, sister;—you seem not to heed my sorrows. This long, long night, I have been inmated with thieves—companioned with criminals, till De Mara's host could be sent for to show that I was the sufferer, not the participator. Sister, will you not speak comfort to your poor Albert, half-distracted with the ordeal he has undergone?"

"De Mara!" cried the unhappy girl, for that one sound alone had really reached her sense:—"yes; I will speak comfortable things of him."

"Speak not of him," exclaimed Albert, with vehemence;—"let not his name be uttered;—let no sign of him, no hint, no smallest thing that gives token of the existence of such a monster, be made palpable to my aching soul."

"Nay—nay, Master Albert," said Urfort, now for the first time interfering, as if somewhat fearing the effects the youth's words might produce on the determination of the maiden; nay, nay, Master Alhert, this is mere romance. The count may have had much provocation for what has so unfortunately come to pass."

Albert, summoned by this voice from the regard which had hitherto been undeviatingly bestowed upon his sister, turned his look towards the last speaker. He gazed;—and by some undefinable chain of associations his whole acquaintance with Urfort flashed on the instant across his brain.

"Ah, ha!" he exclaimed, with fearful energy of manner; "I know you now. Once as I glanced at your fiend-like visage as you stood with hateful smile watching the life-blood as it poured from hapless Wahrend, the thought darted through my mind that that same look had met my gaze before. Now, now, I remember all! The lake—the jetty, the pale moon—and the ruffian grasp! Yes, I remember all."

Urfort was cowed by the denouncing accents with which the youth declared his sudden recollection of what had formerly occurred between them; and he could hardly command sufficient presence of mind to mutter something about his entire ignorance of the circumstances to which Albert

seemed to be referring. But the excited brother saved him the use of further words; for, scarcely listening to the confused sounds that fell from his lips, he continued—"Silence, thou man of many sins! and do you, my sister, learn to know this human pest. Listen to my words, from which even he, with all his reckless hardihood, shrinks abashed. Gaze on his face, and you will see that it speaks a soul within acquainted with the thousand windings and cajoleries of vice. Oh, Madeline, stand not near that wretch; be not within reach of his grasp; pollution is in his touch—murder is the demon he serves."

"Oh, no," cried Madeline; "he is my good angel; he comes with my salvation on his lips: he is the leading star that is to conduct me to Unwalden, whither I go to meet De Mara."

"Sacred and inscrutable powers!" exclaimed the brother, "for what further miseries do you reserve the Orphans of Unwalden? She, who should have been the ruler and director for both seems to have lost all strength and guidance even for herself: and I, who have yet the ability to judge the right, am impotent for its execution. Alas, alas, no friend of trust to aid! No sagacious spirit to direct! Oh that our gentle uncle did but know the dangerous peril that hems us round! Oh that the good Madam Lalande had but lived still to tend us with maternal watch!"

As he spoke these words, his eye by some strange chance rested on the packet that Madeline had rejected as unworthy of her notice. The address of the inclosure—

"A Madame
Madame Lalande,
Genève,"

attracted his attention; and with the tone in which his mind then was the neglected paper seemed to him to be some missive sent in answer to his appeal. Had he perused the accompanying introduction of the chevalier, the marvel would have ceased, and the charm would not have worked to this superstitious bearing. But his eye rested alone on the sealed epistle that was addressed to her whose memory he had just so pathetically adjured. There was no clue that told him how the letter met his wondering gaze; and it was therefore the more easily interpretable into a mysterious and inexplicable reply to his invocation of the shade of his departed monitor. It was in such a frame of mind as this that he eagerly seized the deceptive paper, and perused its contents. They were cunningly worded, but withal so vaguely, as not to trench too minutely upon particulars. The cunning, however, was hardly needed; for, vague or minute, they were just of a nature to take possession of the whole of Albert's heart. He had found himself opposed to his sister, and he wanted an arbitrator:—he had found himself called upon to fight the battle of prudence against her imprudence, and he wanted a champion:—he had found the whole weight of a most threatening chain of circumstances thrust upon him, and he felt that he must be crushed beneath the pressure unless one more powerful than himself came to his assistance. It was at this moment—the very crisis of his struggle—that the treacherous missive of Altoz came within his reach. It was no time to doubt the genuineness of such a communication. The relaxation of Seaton's resolution, and the apology for the letter being penned in a feigned hand, were received as deserving all credence; and when he came to the proposal that the orphans should immediately proceed to Unwalden, there to meet their long-lost friend, the tidings elicited from his utterance a very scream of delight. The arbitrator was provided—the champion was forthcoming—and in Seaton was to be found one whose experience would well be able to bear the load that had nearly overborne the brother's weaker powers of endurance.

Urfort watched the gradual illumination of the youth's countenance as

he traced the fictitious lines which the chevalier had penned, and at length was fain to confess to himself that the project of a letter in the uncle's name was a well-timed manœuvre, and calculated to clear his way from the last difficulty which seemed to bode ill to its desired completion.

In the mean while Madeline grew impatient. She had no motive to fill up the interval (like Urfort) with watching the change of expression which was manifested in the face of her brother; and aught that assumed the shape of pause or cession of procedure came to her disturbed fancy like the threatened ruin of her new world of hope.

"Come, Urfort," cried she; "we must depart this instant, or the count will reach Unwalden before we are on our journey thither."

"Oh, how those names of Urfort and De Mara," exclaimed Albert, "come like a blot on the sweet thoughts that this dear paper has inspired! Look on this letter, sister, and read the words of him———"

"Of whom?—De Mara?"

"No; of one as angel-minded as the Frenchman is black of heart—of Seaton!"

"I will read no letter," exclaimed Madeline, impatiently; "I know no Seaton; I have but one duty left, and that is to share the count's affliction. Come, Urfort, we must away!"

"Still that hateful union of names! To match the combination, hell must be searched—not earth. Sister, hearken to the words of him who loves you more than life. Avoid this man—this fiend, and I will myself conduct you to Unwalden."

This was the point for which Urfort had waited; and he now spoke in his turn. "It is not worth while to battle with your prejudices, young gentleman," said he; "and as to accompanying Ma'm'selle to Unwalden, that is not in my power, for I have elsewhere to bestow myself; so I give you both good day." And then, as he moved towards the door, he whispered to his victim, "remember, if you would meet the count at Unwalden, your journey must be instant." With these words he disappeared.

"Now again I breathe a wholesome air," cried Albert, as he watched his departure; "why was it that I feared to grapple with him, and deliver him to the hands of justice? Twice did the shade of Wahrend seem to call on me to the duty; and twice all my sinews shrank impotent and nerveless at the thought of coming in closer contact with one so vile, or again visiting the hateful walls that held me last night imprisoned to confirm his capture."

"Albert, Albert," cried the maiden, "why do we linger here? Ere this we should have bidden a long farewell to Geneva, and be seeking the promised haven of happiness and restoration."

"You say well," replied the brother, glad to be recalled from the painful feelings that at that moment oppressed his bosom:—"we will waste no further time."

Little preparation was necessary to enable them to embark on their journey. Madeline, still engrossed in the one enthrilling idea that she was about to be reunited to De Mara, sat silent till the chaise that was to convey her to her destination was ready; or, if she ever spoke, it was only to complain that the lapse even of a minute was too much for her patience, when such a result was attending on her progress. But with Albert it was very different. A thousand visions of gladness opened upon him; and when he sprang into the carriage, it was with the feelings of a man who had procured at length the wherewithal by which he was enabled to shake off some frightful impression that had moved as he moved—paused as he paused—and was ever overhead, threatening to descend and sink him to annihilation. Had no letter from Seaton arrived, still he must (failing to persuade her stay) have accompanied his sister on her journey—still he must have done his utmost to counteract the fatal influence that seemed to

be her be-all. How ten thousand times blessed, then, was he that at this very crisis of his movements, that so precious a missive should reach him to cheer him to his task, and to promise that consummation which was nearest to his heart! At Unwalden he might hope for every thing:—the place was made sacred by their earliest recollections;—it was the spot where their mother had taught them, and where they had felt that obedience to her wishes was their most desired endeavour;—it was the hallowed ground that contained the remains of that mother, and where her spirit might best be supposed to be watching over their actions, and guiding their course. All these were soothing thoughts, that gave goodly token of success; and they gathered round the prime recollection that there Seaton was to be recovered, as the ring and satellites of Saturn adorn and aid the brilliancy of that luminary of heaven.

Thus flowed the thoughts of Albert; or, whenever they lagged in their joy-giving tendency, he would read again and again the letter that had wooed him to so much happiness, and endeavour to find fresh meaning in each sentence—new seeds of delight in each of the few words it contained. It announced no pardon to Madeline;—it gave no reason for summoning them to Unwalden;—all was left to future explanation: but still the summons was given—still the promise of reunion was held out; and Albert thought that he could trace even in the very signature a token of the good man's remembrance of former days. The paper, after stating that there were motives for adopting a feigned hand, was signed "H. S."—the natural abbreviation of Henry Seaton: yes, even in this, Albert thought he could trace a kindness; for had the old man still held his offended feelings, the signature would have been Manvers rather than Seaton—his real name rather than that by which he had so long been known and endeared to the Orphans of Unwalden. Thus argued Albert;—thus on small foundation built he high expectations. Alas, poor youth! little did he dream that the only reason why the initial was "S." instead of "M." was because the parties, who had concocted the forgery, only knew the elder by the name of Seaton.

With such consoling thoughts implanted in his bosom, well might the orphan look glad as he felt the swift roll of the carriage under him giving notice of their rapid advance towards his home-village;—well might his heart light up at the recollection of all the charms of Unwalden, long fostered in his memory, but now about to be realised in sooth—well might he have invoked the spot, whither he was so gladly and so speedily returning, in the words of the gentle poet—

> "Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
> My heart, untravell'd fondly turns to thee."

Meanwhile Urfort, after pausing awhile on the stairs that conducted from Madeline's apartment to the street to re-adjust his disguise, proceeded stealthily, but with rapid pace, towards Kobolt's *auberge* to regain the count, and give him the signal for commencing his journey to Unwalden, with fair promise of meeting there the deluded maiden.

De Mara, in spite of all the comfortable assurances that had been preached to him by Urfort and the chevalier, was still the prey of a thousand doubts and misgivings. The death-scene of Wahrend haunted him with a fearful succession of ill-forboding phantoms; and the thought of what might happen, should he fall into the hands of justice before he got clear of the Swiss jurisdiction, would force itself on his mind in spite of his strenuous efforts to think of Madeline, and Madeline only. Nor with respect to her did he feel altogether assured, notwithstanding the confident manner and predictions of Urfort. He knew that he had a determined enemy in her brother,

and he knew that that enemy was too well aware of the dishonourable means that had been the cause of so fatally terminating the previous day's encounter. It was therefore with anxious feelings that he attended the return of Urfort, one moment picturing his continued absence as arising from having been arrested by the police of Geneva, and at another as emanating from the impossibility of obtaining Madeline's consent to proceed to Unwalden.

As soon as Urfort entered the room where the count was thus pondering over the circumstances that environed him, the latter hastily exclaimed, "The news! the news! and for once let one word speak all."

"One word cannot do it," replied the other; "but one sentence can. Madeline is already on her road towards Unwalden."

De Mara looked at his informant for a moment, as if he were almost incredulous of the possibility of such good tidings being true; and then, as suddenly entering into the belief, he sprang from his seat, and cried, "The chaise! the chaise! quick; we have not an instant to lose."

"Your lordship forgets that the chevalier is to provide the chaise; besides which, it is impossible to depart till he finds the means, which in these unromantic days are absolutely necessary for the safe conduct of any journey."

"That is true!" exclaimed De Mara; "now could I find it in my conscience to excommunicate Altoz for ever from my friendship for this ill-timed delay, when he must know, or ought to know, that a minute to-day, is of more value to me than a year in time to come."

It was not long, however, before the chevalier reached the hotel where he was so anxiously expected.

"Altoz," cried the count, as soon as he saw him enter, "I do not know that I shall ever forgive you for wasting these precious moments. But how now, chevalier? what has dressed your face in so dark a cloud? you seem to have borrowed my colours of half an hour ago. Cheerily, man; all goes well; and a few hours gives Madeline to my arms."

"Count De Mara," said he who was thus addressed, very gravely, "the chaise is at the door, and in it you will find the box of which you spoke, and the pistols which you solicited as a loan. Have I performed my promise?"

"Right well, chevalier!" returned the count, with an accent of surprise; "but why this question, and why this gravity?"

"Have I not always proved myself your friend?" continued Altoz, without relaxing from his former tone.

"Nay, this is becoming ridiculous!" exclaimed De Mara, with a laugh; "you can answer that question as well as I; so, good chevalier, I cannot stay any longer to be catechised."

"One word more," cried Altoz, "and I have done. Will it please you to explain how Monsieur Wahrend came by his death?"

The count started, and turned pale. At length he said, "I thought you told me yesterday that you knew every thing connected with that melancholy circumstance."

"I thought I did," returned the chevalier, "when I had been informed by your host that a duel had taken place between you and the Swiss, and that the fortune of the encounter had been yours. But—but—why should I conceal the fact? I, as well as the other members of the Knot with whom you were known to be connected, have been waited on this morning by the chief of police in Geneva, and he has laid before us evidence which, if true, gives a character to the nature of that duel, which yesterday I should have denounced as most false and impossible."

"And why not so to-day?"

"Facts that seem to bear truth on the face of them have been submitted to us: the bloody footstool partly broken as if by the weight of some heavy

body falling on it, and some of the expressions of the dying man that were overheard by one of the garçons of the hotel, appear to give confirmation to the decisive testimony of Albert. Neither can I forget that your own conduct towards me last night was somewhat enigmatical, though till this evidence was detailed, I knew not how to guess at its meaning. Let one word tell all. I have executed your commission, because my word was passed to do so; but my more important business here is to demand in the name of our friends, from whom I come deputed, an explanation of this affair."

"Altoz, Altoz, is this your friendship for me?" cried the count; "and at a moment when you knew that I must instantly depart for Unwalden or lose Madeline for ever. Perhaps even these few minutes snatch her from my arms."

"I think, count," returned the chevalier, "that the want of friendship arose with you rather than with me. Let this matter be explained, and I am still your friend. I have already shown it this morning, for when it was understood that the motive of the police in making the Knot acquainted with what had happened was in the hopes that they might assist in your arrest, a proposal for giving you up was seriously entertained; and I believe I may say, that it was owing to my interference that it was rejected till you should have had full opportunity to explain."

"I thank you for your kindness," said the count, in a melancholy tone; "but why say you that it was I that broke the bond of friendship between us?"

"Can you ask that, when you remember that you suffered me to go away last night undeceived? for you must well have imagined that when you were implicated in such an affair, I should not long remain unmolested by the police. But I had determined not to speak of my own private feelings; suffice it to say, that I am here as the representative of the Knot, and in their name I demand an explanation."

"And by what right does the Knot make this demand?"

"This question from you, count De Mara!" replied Altoz; "have you indeed forgotten that the bond that has drawn us together is that of honour? Do you not remember the way in which you yourself so strenuously opposed the admission of the Marquis of Cavella, because it was whispered that he had shrunk from a challenge in Padua; and when it was urged upon you by his proposer that it was too much to try a man on mere rumour, your answer was, that even the breath of a whisper of dishonour was enough to require his rejection? These things must be fresh in your memory; and it is these things which entitle the Knot to demand an explanation of this affair."

"They shall have it then," cried De Mara; "but on one condition—that you, as their representative, will meet me at Unwalden for that purpose. I think this is not too much to require at your hands, as you are well aware how peremptorily my departure is demanded."

"Your condition shall be agreed to," replied Altoz; "the Knot have left this affair to my absolute disposal; and I pledge myself to be at Unwalden as soon as possible after you, for the final settlement of it. Till then, farewell. Let me however add, by way of advice, that you will do well to be cautious. From the observations of the chief of police, there can be little doubt that every exertion will be made to procure your arrest."

"I am obliged for your caution," said the count, somewhat stiffly: "till we meet at Unwalden, farewell."

The chevalier then took his departure to return to the city; and in another minute De Mara and Urfort were in pursuit of the orphans.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Beatr. Why, 'tis impossible thou canst be so wicked,
Or shelter such a cunning cruelty;
To make his death the murderer of my honour!
Thy language is so bold and vicious,
I cannot see which way I can forgive it
With any modesty.
Deflores. Pish! you forget yourself.
A woman dipt in blood, and talk of modesty!
MIDDLETON AND ROWLEY'S CHANGELING.

AN opportunity has already been taken in the preceding chapter to describe the feelings of joy with which Albert undertook to conduct his sister to Unwalden, whither he went in the full expectation of meeting Seaton. But before the carriage reached its place of destination, some portion of his gladness of heart had evaporated. Since the commencement of Madeline's unsuspected disease (which was hourly becoming stronger and stronger, and more decisively marked each minute in the agitation of her manner, and the wildness of her language) Albert for the first time found himself in uninterrupted tête-à-tête with the afflicted one. On previous occasions one intruder or another had interfered, and he had never been alone with her sufficiently long for him to scan carefully the meaning of those changes which were but too visible. It was not so in this instance however. The carriage rolled steadily onwards towards the goal which both its inmates were so desirous of attaining, and no external object presented itself to distract the attention of Albert from his sister, or to interrupt that flow of thought which for the last few days had had such omnipotent possession of her imagination.

But though the prospect of a reunion with De Mara ought to have been nearly certified to the expectation of the maiden, it was on this very point that she displayed that fickleness of conclusion, which is so peculiarly characteristic of those who are labouring under a disturbed intellect, and whose inconsecutiveness of apprehension is at once the consequence and the indication of "the mind diseased." For awhile her heart was overflowing with joy at the thought that she had insured her grand design of being reunited to the count. But suddenly another idea forced itself into her imagination. The recollection of Albert's unwillingness to assist her in such an object—of his aversion to the nobleman—of his unremitting attempts to persuade her to abandon the fugitive—all came at once upon her mind, and furnished her with the thought that her brother had only inveigled her into the chaise upon the promise of conducting her to Unwalden, while in fact the direction in which they were proceeding was far contrary to the realization of that promise.

"Albert," cried she, wildly, as the thought gained admission to her brain, "whither are we journeying? What road is this along which the horses pace so rapidly? And why do your eyes glisten, as each moment bears us further and further on our travel?"

The youth gazed at her who thus questioned with wonder; and there was a pause before he replied—"If one question may answer another, let me rather ask why these inquiries?"

"Ah, do you equivocate!" cried she:—"nay, then, I read it all. Stop the chaise!—Quick, quick;—this instant call to the driver to turn his

horses' heads; or I will spring from the carriage, and show you how well I understand your meaning."

"Gracious Heaven! my sister," exclaimed the affrighted youth, "what does this portend? Are we not on the road to Unwalden, and will not a few short hours bring us to the cherished spot, where happiness was ours for so many years, and will be so again, under the kindly care of our returning uncle?"

"This is not the road to Unwalden," cried Madeline; "I remember no part of these woods, these rocks, or these tracks. You are conducting me by some strange and unknown route away from him who in himself is all the world to me."

"Nay, sister; now I see that you are doing this only to grieve my heart, and make heavy this journey, which should be all lightness and rejoicing. Look at yon running stream, that dashes in harmless fury against the antique bridge that crosses it, and then subsides into a smooth and unruffled surface, giving bright reflection of tree that waves, and cloud that floats above. Do you not remember passing here on our way to Geneva? Do you not remember saying, as you cast a melancholy look upon this self-same prospect, 'Oh that my uncle could gaze upon my heart as I do upon this stream, and behold how truly the rude gushing of my passions has subsided into calmness and sobriety, reflecting nought but the recollection of his kindness and fostering care!'"

"Did I say so?" faintly ejaculated the poor half-witted maiden: "and is this, indeed, the road to Unwalden?" added she, as she remembered something of what Albert had narrated.

"You are nought, Madeline," replied the brother, "to ask such a question:—do you not remember yon high cliff that climbs and climbs with many craggy stages towards the sky, as though it would thrust its uttermost head into the very bosom of the firmament? It was on that rock you wished to stand, endowed with an omniscient eye, that you might penetrate from its commanding summit into the heart of each region of the globe, and so trace where it was that the good Seaton was concealing himself from our longing search."

"And when shall we reach Unwalden, if this indeed be true?"

"Soon, very soon, dear Madeline! But, oh! how tenfold sooner in appearance, would my sister but dismiss these strange and inexplicable fancies, and let her thoughts flow in the same sweet spirit as when we last journeyed on this road! Then my ears heard you not; and in what I have related, I have rather given your purport than your words, explained to me in such signs as might best instruct my defective sense. But now when I have perfect organs, and your gentle voice would be as music to me, you speak not, or speak only to harass and perplex."

"Alas! dear Albert, I can speak only of one thing," murmured the maiden:—"but is it, indeed, Unwalden that we approach?" And then, as if unconscious that she had asked the question, she put her head out of the window of the chaise without waiting for reply, and appeared to be carefully studying each object that the varying road presented, as if she would again and again assure herself that she was not being deceived, or unwittingly made the victim of treachery.

But though now silent, she had said enough to alarm the mind of Albert, and awaken it from that state of tranquil hope which the expectation of meeting Seaton at Unwalden had conferred upon it. The strange manner in which his sister had questioned the honesty of his intentions, and the want of controul that appeared to predominate over every word and action that escaped her, launched the youth into a sea of doubt and conjecture, the current of which bore him far away from the real solution of the mystery. In vain he taxed his imagination to discover what Madeline's way-

wardness of language might portend;—in vain he sought to persuade himself that he still had power to direct her course aright. He could not bring his mind to these conclusions; for though true it was that for awhile her wild suspicions seemed to be lulled, the recollection of their outpouring was still unaccounted for, and reminded him that again they might burst forth equally unexpectedly, and baffle his best endeavours to quell their overwhelming spirit.

The consideration of these difficulties recalled to his mind the means of discovery which were within his possession; and each time that this power of solution presented itself to his imagination, the more entirely conviction came upon him that this was the only method by which he could hope to ascertain the real purport of those impulses which were swaying his sister's conduct.

The enforced recurrence of this remedy to his mind was productive of one advantage. The time had been when he could not contemplate for a moment the possibility of putting his dear-prized theory into practice without a sort of involuntary shrinking from the task, as if it was prompting him to something like the pollution of all that he held most choice and sacred. It was the strength of this sensation that led him to resist so vigorously the proposal of Madeline that the first effect of this discovery should be tried on De Mara. To have devoted the mysterious boon to such a purpose was frightful to his imagination; but when the incoherent manner of his sister, on receipt of the news of Wahrend's death, had urged him to employ his precious engine of elucidation, the pain with which he contemplated the effort was materially diminished; and though it might be that the summons of the officer to attend the syndics appeared even at that period as a sort of relief to his feelings, yet the resolution which he had then taken to work the Soul's Transfusion between Madeline and himself had served to pave the way to his more willingly coming to the same determination on the present occasion, and had enabled him to look upon this practical exhibition of what might be called the mistress of his soul, without the accompaniment of those repulsive sensations which might have unfitted him for the labour.

Each mile that the carriage rolled on towards its place of destination—each moment that he sat in fearful expectation that Madeline might again burst forth in the same strain of suspicious unkindness that had characterised her late ejaculations—confirmed him the more resolutely in his purpose; and by the time that he first caught a glimpse of the well-known village rising in the distant landscape, his determination was firm and strong to effect the great change of souls as soon as they should have reached their long-abandoned home.

The chaise stopped at the door of the Single Cottage; and as an old woman was in possession of it for the purpose of keeping it in order, the re-instatement of the orphans in their whilome peaceful dwelling was a matter of easy accomplishment. But though thus far the arrangement was complete, the minds of both the travellers were in a state of painful suspense. Madeline looked for the arrival of De Mara with impatience heaped on impatience, as the poets of old feigned mountain heaped on mountain; and Albert heard with astonishment from the old guardian of the cottage that Seaton had given no token of his being at Unwalden or in its neighbourhood.

This unaccountable absence of their uncle might have been an additional motive for Albert's immediately undertaking the task he had prescribed to himself; but the condition of Madeline, on finding that De Mara was equally as unheard-of as Seaton, once again made him shrink. Having dismissed the old woman to the village-inn, there to inquire whether any intelligence concerning Seaton could be ascertained, the youth sought to

appease the disturbed emotions of his sister. He endeavoured to distract her thoughts from their one-engrossing theme, by bringing to her recollection those associations with which his own heart teemed when he remembered where he was. But in vain!—Still in vain!—The Single Cottage seemed to awake in her no more sympathy than the hut that an eremite might have built in the wilds of Caucasus. The reminiscences, which Albert would have roused, of their earlier days, fell upon her ear dull and unprofitable as the solemn bell on that of the corpse whose interment it announces. Even the name of her mother—that name which once would have drawn floods of earnest tears from the very well-spring of her heart, produced no effect on the wretched ruin of mind that still occupied her frame.

"I will go to the grave of our mother," cried Albert; "and will not my sister go with me? Shall not both the orphans unite their tears on the spot that is hallowed for ever in their hearts? Come, dearest! Of old it was matter of reproach, if either went to that sanctuary of our affections without the other. Let us not after so long an absence be separate mourners at her tomb."

As the youth spoke, he watched the maiden with intense earnestness; and once he thought he traced the approach of a tear to the very brink of her eyelids;—once he thought he saw the bright drop tremble on the extreme edge, as if ready to do homage to the memory of her he had invoked. But, no!—no tears came forth from nature's fount:—the eye again assumed its fixedness of look—the cheek was still blanched, unwatered by the refreshing moisture of aroused affection; and, in answer to his appeal, the forlorn one did but shake her head in mournful intimation that not even this last conjuration had power to bring back the lost apprehensions of her mind.

"O God! O God!" exclaimed the agonised youth; "and cannot even the sacred name of mother change this frightful picture? Rouse thee, then, Albert!—rouse thee to thy task; and, ere it be too late, solve this inexplicable riddle. And yet, a little minute! my sister refuses my holy invitation to the tomb of our parent. Double then—twice double—yes, twice tenfold is the duty mine to kneel on the turf that shrouds those sacred remains. All things on the face of earth shall give way to that first of charges. How dare I think of doing one simple act till that summons from the grave is obeyed! Yes, my mother, I come, I come!—and be it yours to hover near me, when I return to accomplish the only deed that gives prospect of the restoration of your children's happiness."

Almost unconsciously he uttered these words, and before they were concluded he had quitted the cottage, and was rapidly passing towards the spot where the remains of the hapless Agnes were interred. Jealous of observation, and little desirous, while engaged in this pious errand, of meeting the gaze of the loiterers of the hamlet, he crept with stealthy pace and by unfrequented paths to the churchyard of the village:—each step, as it bore him nearer and nearer to that place of rest eternal, served to attune his mind to the object that commanded his motions, and to allay the more corrosive sensations that his sister's conduct had inflicted on his heart. At length the churchyard was gained:—all around seemed silent, and consecrate to solitude, and her companion—melancholy; and Albert with quick but trembling pace glided to the well-known corner where a green mound and pure white slab marked his mother's resting-place. Full of present love, replete with honest affection, with heart high-beating, with pulse swift-flowing, with tears quick-chasing down his burning cheeks, he reached the grave; but all this full course of his soul's best sentiments was checked on beholding, to his utter astonishment, a human form usurping that place which he held to be sacredly his own, and kneeling by the side of the humble mausoleum.

The youth paused irresolute, but not before the echo of his approaching footfall had reached the kneeler's ear. He looked up—hesitated, as if in doubt for a moment; and then "Albert, dearest Albert!" broke upon the hearing of the orphan, whose voice almost in a shriek responded, "Uncle! —Seaton!—Oh, my God, I thank thee for this!" and at the same minute the two were kneeling where they had often knelt before, fast locked in each other's embrace, and silently invoking her, who had brought them thither, to be witness of their rapture.

"Dearest, dearest Albert," at length cried Seaton, "how comes this happiness? Why at Unwalden?—But, alas! I forget; you cannot hear my words, and ——"

"Cannot I hear your words?" replied Albert, with a melancholy smile: "methinks, though I never heard that dear voice before, I should have known it amid a Babel of sounds, for it comes soft and gentle on my ear, as I ever accented it in my mind's fancy."

"And do you, indeed, hear me speak? What joy! What delight! But let explanation pause awhile, for I have a thousand other questions to ask. Where is Madeline?"

"Where should she be, dear uncle, but at the Single Cottage?"

"That is strange! I stopped at the village-inn but ten minutes since, and they told me that you had quitted Unwalden the morning after my departure, and had not since returned."

"True! true!" cried Albert; "our arrival is hardly older than your own: but we got your letter directed to Madame Lalande, at Geneva, and could we for a moment hesitate?"

"What letter? Madame Lalande is not at Geneva."

"Alas! no;" returned Albert, with a sigh; "unless it may be said that our poor mother is at Unwalden. Poor lady! she died most suddenly."

"Died suddenly! and at Geneva! These are strange mysteries. It is only five days since that I quitted Madame Lalande at Genoa."

"Gracious Heaven! my uncle," exclaimed the youth; "full a month ago, Count de Mara told us that she was dead. Nay, she must have been, for we heard of some examination before the syndics on account of her sudden decease."

"You have been fearfully deceived, my Albert. God grant that I may yet be in time to avert the mischief which such falsehood must have been intended to cover! Who is this Count De Mara?"

"Oh, mention him not; he is a fiend—a monster—the murderer of the good and gentle Wahrend, who fell beneath his hand."

"Wahrend dead!" cried the old man, with tears; "when will this scene of horror terminate? But his destroyer—what of him?"

"He either is at Unwalden, or will be here anon."

"Why do the officers of justice bring him here?"

"He brings himself, alas! He is not yet arrested, having, in spite of all diligence, escaped their search."

"How is this?" demanded Seaton; "you know his intentions; you know that he is the murderer of Wahrend—and yet you tell me that he is at liberty. Why do you not have him seized?"

"Madeline! Madeline!" exclaimed Albert, almost frantic at the question.

"Ah, I see it now. Is she with this De Mara? But, no; you told me a minute since that she was at the Single Cottage. Where will this man stay when he arrives at Unwalden?"

"At the village-inn, most likely."

"At the inn!" cried Seaton; "why, now I remember, just as I quitted it to come hither, a carriage drove up with the blinds so closely drawn, that I could but just discern that it contained two travellers."

"It must have been the count, and that villain Urfort," exclaimed Albert.

"Who is Urfort?"

"The abettor of the other in the murder of Wahrend—his creature for all wickedness!"

"Time, then, is precious: we must away, and inform the magistrate of the place who these strangers are. When he hears of the death of Wahrend by their hand, he will be prompt to act; the whole village will be in arms, for right well was the kind Swiss beloved by them."

With these words they quitted the churchyard. For a minute both seemed wrapped in thought, as they paced rapidly onward side by side.

At length Seaton exclaimed, "O Albert, Albert! What a meeting is this! I expected sorrow on my return, but not such sorrow as this."

"You have not yet explained the motive of that return," cried the youth.

"A word must do it now, till a more time-serving opportunity occurs. Often and often did I reproach myself for having left you, but could not strain my courage to the pitch of returning, till, entirely by accident, I met Madame Lalande at Genoa five days ago. She told me that she had neither seen nor heard any thing of you while residing at Geneva, but that she had been detained at Genoa for some months by a long fit of illness, from which she was even then but barely recovered. This intelligence struck heavy on my heart; for one of the consolations with which I had continually fostered my sickly fancy was, that in my absence you would apply to that lady, and that she would occupy my place in your affections and conduct. Indeed, it was the assurance of that which prevented my making known to her the course that I was pursuing, lest it should be the means of enabling you to discover whither I had retreated."

"It was the information, then, or rather the non-information, that you received from Madame Lalande, that brought you back to Unwalden?"

"I think that would have been sufficient of itself to have accomplished my return; but Madame Lalande added a piece of news which resolved me on the instant to set out for Unwalden. By a most extraordinary chance, which time will not now allow me to explain, she had come to the certain knowledge that your father—that Warner, whom we had so long supposed dead, was still alive, and that he had, beyond all doubt, been at Geneva very lately, though, whether accident had taken him thither, or a suspicion of the direction in which Agnes had retreated, could not be ascertained."

"Then we are not orphans!" cried Albert.

"Alas, that you were!" replied the other; "I cannot describe to you the horror with which I contemplated the possibility of your being encountered by that fiend in human shape;—excuse the appellation, dear Albert; but did you know as much of that man's life as I do, you would be compelled to admit that my designation of him is too painfully true. Thank God, the pang of his having discovered his deserted children is at least spared me."

"But how extraordinary that, without premeditation, both you and we should have returned to Unwalden at the same moment!"

"Let it inspire us with the hope that all may yet be well. The letter of which you have spoken is evidently a wicked fabrication of De Mara, and thus in his cunning is he foiled; for by bringing you here he has brought you to my care—when I, by my coming, only thought of protecting you against a man with whom you have not met. De Mara we shall be able to overthrow; but I confess, had I had to encounter Warner, the task would have been dreadful—perhaps too much for my strength. On receiving Madame Lalande's intelligence, I thought that I could dare any thing; and on the spur of the feeling, I set out for Unwalden with the vow that, should he be here, I would confront him, and bid him shrink with horror at

the sight of the injured Manvers. But during my journey I have had time to recollect his hardened brutality—his impenetrable nature, and to confess to myself that such an appeal would have been made in vain. The name of Manvers would no more have abashed him, than any other of the hundred victims whom the course of an ill-spent life has crushed beneath his feet."

"Oh, uncle, uncle!" cried Albert, "spare these words—spare these looks; and do not call yourself Manvers—to us you have ever been Seaton. It is the name we love; and though your farewell letter told us it was a fiction, we have ever felt that to our hearts it came as your best appellation, for it is associated with all your care and kindness of us."

"Heaven grant, my Albert, that my care and kindness may be able to fulfil your happy destiny! But we are now at the division of the roads. Do you take that which leads to the inn, and ascertain whether the new comers be really De Mara and his companion; while I go to the Single Cottage to secure Madeline against the intrusion of this bad man."

With these words they parted—each to his separate destination.

Albert's conjecture with respect to the occupants of the chaise that had stopped at the village-inn, was not ill-founded. Scarcely had Manvers, as we must now call him, quitted the threshold of the *auberge*, when forth stepped De Mara and Urfort, and as speedily as the matter could be arranged, they took possession of such apartments as the place afforded. The count had had a restless journey, and his follower, though he cared little for the evident discomposure of his patron's manner, plainly perceived that a crisis was on the eve of arrival, and that the affair of Madeline must run in direct unison with De Mara's present temper, or farewell to all hopes of obtaining the promised reward, the expectation of which alone detained him in attendance on the Frenchman.

It was with this feeling that he was the first to exclaim, as soon as they found themselves alone in the apartment allotted to them, "We must be stirring, my lord, and be with the girl before she has an opportunity of seeing any of her old village-cronies."

"Urfort," cried the count, "my heart misgives me, and I feel as if I were even now standing on the brink of life and death. I am here in the very midst of my enemies;—it was from this village Wahrend came—how am I to answer his relations, should they discover me? It is here that I have appointed to explain to Altoz that which cannot be explained;—how am I to reply to the demands my associates require at my hands?"

"Cheerly, cheerly, my patron," replied Urfort, who had been partly prepared for this explosion;—"one half hour, and the girl shall be won!—mind, I pledge myself to that. The thick-headed Switzers shall indeed be clever, if within that space of time they can find you here. And as to Altoz and his precious notions of honour, if you will take my advice, you will be beforehand with him and his constituents; and instead of waiting for them to cast you off, do you cast them off, and bid them go hang in their wisdom."

"Alas! they have ever been my friends."

"But are so no longer," returned Urfort, "after this errand of the chevalier. If your lordship remembered as much of Will Shakspeare as I do, (and, God wot, I have not read a play of his for this many a year,) you would exclaim in the words of Timon—

> 'You Knot of mouth-friends—smoke and luke-warm water
> Is your perfection.'

But we have more pressing business. Do you intend to give up Madeline?"

"It would go near to break my heart to do so, after all the risk and peril

she has cost me. But of all places in the world this was the worst chosen. I am full on the enemy's quarters."

"You may thank Altoz for the choice of the place," cried Urfort.

"Do not speak his name;—the remembrance of him sickens me to the death. O De Mara! De Mara! how wretched is your estate become, when you fear to meet him who was so lately your sworn and bosom friend! Urfort, I will stay here no longer;—each sound that I hear pictures to me the approach of —— no matter whom, for all mankind has execration for me. I will fly this instant."

"And without the girl? for shame, for shame, when half an hour gives her to your arms!"

"Your promises," cried De Mara, "have lost their impress on me. You have led me on too long. Unwalden is my dungeon, and I will stay no longer in it."

"Nay, nay, my noble patron," exclaimed the other, each moment becoming more fearful of the fate of his hundred louis; "never before was Madeline so completely within our grasp: give me one little half hour, and I pledge myself to bring her to your lordship."

The count shook his head.

"Nay, only one half hour;—the risk is nothing; the experiment worth a world. Think of her glorious charms;—call to your recollection her thousand beauties;—and all for one half hour's sacrifice."

"I will stay the time," cried the nobleman, wakened by Urfort's words to the memory of all the joys with which he had so long fed himself; "but remember—only one half hour! if you exceed that time, or then return without her, no power on earth shall detain me."

"I accept the terms," answered Urfort, "and in half an hour I bring you Madeline as the companion of your further flight. Are you sure that you have money enough to continue your journey beyond the means of pursuit?—of course I mean after my hundred louis shall have been paid, for I need not remind your lordship on her appearance here they will be earned."

"Look on this box," replied the count, opening it;—"see, it is well nigh full of gold."

"Ah! ha!" exclaimed the other; "were that mine, I would bid defiance to all the thief-takers and all the chevaliers that ever breathed."

"But we waste time," cried De Mara."

"I will but put this precious load and your pistols safe in the back room, lest during my absence the host might enter, and the sight should frighten him from his landlordly propriety—and then away to the Single Cottage, where no doubt Madeline is safe arrived ere this."

"Put the box in the closet near the window," said the count; "but leave the pistols in this room, for I have not yet loaded them; and though half an hour (if you keep your promise) will soon be over, I must at all events be prepared for the worst, for never shall officer of justice put hand upon De Mara."

The box was soon disposed of as the nobleman had directed; and then Urfort, with another word of assurance to his employer, departed with rapid pace for the cottage, where Madeline, left alone by her brother's visit to the grave of their mother; was ruminating in wild and incoherent method.

The road to the Single Cottage was easily found, and he hastened thither, giving the few minutes, that the distance occupied, to the consideration of the manner in which he was to meet the victim of his unlawful design. He felt no difficulty as to the state of Madeline's heart; but still as events had turned out, he could not but perceive that it might require great ingenuity to bring her to the terms, which, under the pressure of

time and circumstances, would afford the completion that was demanded by the Count. De Mara, it was evident, was on the brink of taking the alarm, and the least further delay would be the signal of his abandoning the pursuit, in which case the promised gratuity would disappear at the same time as the count. The only method that Urfort could suggest to his mind for the prevention of this, was the taking Madeline by storm, and so to play upon her fears and passions as to make her yield to the suit of De Mara. The office was a dangerous one, and not such as Urfort would willingly have undertaken. But what other could be adopted? A bare half-hour would witness De Mara's flight; and therefore, unless the maiden could be pressed into surrendering at once, all was lost. The only point that promised any thing in his favour was the condition of Madeline's mind. The entireness of her affection for the nobleman was beyond doubt; but Urfort had also discerned something of the intellectual secession of power that had been gradually taking place, and it was on that perception that he chiefly built his plan of attack; for he thought that if with her dread of losing the count, he could so intermingle her share in the late distressful scenes that had occurred, the union of the two might so confuse her understanding as to leave her at the mercy of her pursuers.

Armed with these resolutions, he reached the Single Cottage, and speedily obtained ingress. His presence seemed to have a charmed effect upon the maiden. Her countenance brightened as he entered, and she started from her seat to receive him.

"Are you indeed come at last, good Urfort?" she cried: "oh, what a dreary while it has appeared! But De Mara—where is he? Why comes he not with you?"

"He could not come," replied the other impressively.

"Could not come! Oh, Urfort! what means that 'could not?'—Is he well? Where tarries he?"

"He lies like a guilty thing, lest those who seek for him should find their prey."

"But they shall not find him. Who is there here to betray him? Oh, take me to him, and together we will fly to the world's end, rather than harm shall reach him."

"But will you promise to console him in his sorrows? Will you be his in grief and joy?"

"Am I not his?" exclaimed the maiden:—"what has brought me to Unwalden but love for him? What is it that has raised such strange convulsions here, but the share I take in him and his?" And as she spoke she pressed her hand convulsively to her burning forehead.

"You will not understand me, Madeline," cried the fiend:—"will you prove that you are his by womanly yielding? Will you hang fondly round his neck, and return pressure for pressure—kiss for kiss? Will you forget the old-woman maxims of a croaking world, and be his in all that woman can be man's?"

"I will be his wife," softly murmured Madeline.

This was a reply for which even Urfort was not prepared: but the moments were precious; and if some answer was not given, all opportunity would be lost. Now, thought he, invention stands my friend!

"Madeline," he replied, with well-affected solemnity, "that cannot be. Start not—tremble not—De Mara is already married."

The poor creature shrieked as he uttered the words, and would have fallen, but that his ready arm supported her to a sort of ottoman that filled the window-seat.

"Air! Give me air, for God's sake!" she exclaimed: "take this bandage from my throat, that seems as if it were grappling me to destruction. But you said not married, good Urfort?"

"The word is true," cried he; "but what then? Years since he was separated from his wife, and you shall take her place in all but the miserable form that silly laws require."

"Never! never!" said the maiden, distraught; "I think the wicked news has given me strength. Where is my brother? Stay for me, Albert. Now, NOW! I can go with you to our mother's grave."

"Nay, nay!" cried Urfort, with a laugh; "the only grave for you is De Mara's arms. Come, he is near at hand; I will take you to him."

"Oh, if mercy has any portion in your frame, let me not see him. Married! Yes, that was the word that sounded like the overwhelming trumpet of earth's last day! And yet you would take me to De Mara! Oh, rather take me from myself, and give me annihilation, in exchange for the thousand horrors that rack my brain."

"You talk vainly, fair maiden," replied her tormentor; "De Mara's you must be, and his alone. What is it you have brought upon him? The slaughter of the Swiss—an ignominious flight—and the hue and cry of the basest of the human race. For all this mischief he has only you as a reward: in that at least he must not be foiled."

"Powers of mercy!" cried the afflicted one, "what is it you say? I think you be a monster, though you wear the semblance of a man."

"It is you that trench on humanity," answered Urfort with a horrid laugh, "in showing such ingratitude, when I am labouring for your love. But this is child's play. Remember Wahrend and his bloody death! Think you it was De Mara that killed him?—No, it was you:—you plunged the glittering weapon in his heart, for it was you that sounded the trumpet to the onslaught."

"Oh miserable, wretched Madeline!"

"It was at your command," continued Urfort, in his dreadful summary—"it was at your command that the count entered on the deadly strife. Not on his head, then, but on yours is the blood of Wahrend. Deep, deep are you imbued in the crime; and yet now you claim the right to stand upon your woman's modesty, as though you were pure as the unsinning babe. It is now that you shrink from your companion—now you desert him in his hour of trial."

"Mercy!" cried Madeline, "mercy!"

"What! was the noble count to fight your battles?—was he to bare his bosom to the Switzer's angry blade?—and is he now to be cheated of his booty? Pretty young lady, you must be taught justice, if you know it not. But we dally with time. De Mara waits, and you must to him."

"Not a thousand winged steeds should drag me to him!"

"Perhaps so," cried Urfort, with another of his howling laughs—"perhaps so, for we deal not in hippogriffs; but at least we will see how much one strong man is able to do towards it.—Come, pretty maiden, this way to the count and the joys of love." And, as he spoke, he wound his athletic arms around her form, and bore her onwards towards the door of the cottage, while the helpless sufferer shrieked with piteous note, uttering such plaintive words as would have wooed the heart of aught save such a fiend to mercy.

But, even as the monster reached the door with his helpless burthen, it opened from without, and the Senior, who had hurried forward on hearing the sounds of lamentation, stood before them. For a single moment there was a fear-striking pause, while the two men glared at one another with strange and portentous expression; and then with simultaneous burst, "Manvers!"—"Warner!" escaped from either's lips.

Yes, it was too true. The demon, that for weeks had been plotting Madeline's destruction—the wretch beyond all wretches, that at that instant was bearing her to the polluting arms of De Mara, was no other than HER FATHER!

"Most disgusting of fiends!" exclaimed Manvers, who in a moment interpreted the meaning of the scene; "do we again meet—and at such an epoch? Tremble, villian;—shrink into nothingness;—or pray the earth in her bounty to rend her bosom and engross you, ere I tell you the hapless creature you yet hold in your sinful arms is your daughter—the offspring of the broken-hearted Agnes."

Warner did tremble at the words:—he tottered from his standing, and Madeline would have fallen but for the seat that was at hand to receive her.

"Is she indeed my daughter?" groaned the man, as if for the instant stricken with the enormity of his guilt.

"Thy most unhappy daughter," answered Manvers, "as surely as thou art the hateful Urfort that hast been working for her utter undoing. But justice—quick-footed justice is upon you. The police is roused;—thy crimes are known;—and here, in the face of Heaven, I seize upon thee to answer thy long course of sin."

As he spoke, he grappled with the appalled Felon. For a moment it seemed as if the animal strength of the latter was so cowed by the guilt that was lodged within, that he could not struggle against the grasp even of one so feeble as the care-worn Manvers. But the pristine callousness of his soul was speedily on its return, and as it gained upon him, it appeared to re-instate his nerves and fibres in their ancient vigour. He in his turn seized Manvers. The contest was but momentary. The iron frame and compact limbs of Warner found no match in the attenuated powers of his opponent, and one gigantic effort on his part was sufficient to hurl the unnerved Senior to the ground.

"Lie there, old dotard!" exclaimed the conqueror, "and believe you owe your life to the presence of —— psha! What care I for daughter or relationship? But for one piece of information still I thank you. If the police be indeed roused, it is time for Warner to take care of himself: and so, farewell for ever, tottering old man; nor seek again to confront one who may not next time be disposed to treat a gripe of the neck so leniently."

Swiftly he quitted the cottage. The wretched Manvers for a moment hesitated what course to pursue. He knew not how to leave Madeline, who, since her release from the grasp of Warner, had continued lying motionless, and apparently senseless, on the ottoman; and yet it swelled his heart with indignation to think that the monster might escape, if not instantly pursued.

At this moment Albert entered.

"Saw you not Warner?" cried the senior.

"Warner!" exclaimed the youth: "I saw Urfort this moment. He fled past me towards the village like a greyhound."

"Towards the village?—Good!—Look to your sister, dear Albert, till I return; or meet me anon at the inn, if I overstay her impatience." And without further explanation he followed in the track which Albert pointed out as that of the fugitive.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It takes it in itself, and, cunningly
Changing itself, the object soon perceives;
For straight itself in self-same shape adorning
Becomes the same with quick and strange transforming.
P. FLETCHER.

THE rapid disappearance of his uncle left Albert in a maze of bewilderment. That which was already dark and obscure grew more and more confused to his comprehension, and he found himself in the midst of the most threatening uncertainty. What course to pursue—what steps to take, he knew not. He would have pursued Manvers, but his words, "Look to your sister," still chained him to the spot on which he stood.

"Tell me, dear Madeline," said he, as these words recurred to his memory, "what means this strange departure of our uncle?"

But Madeline spoke not; and when he gazed upon her, it seemed to him as if she had sunk in slumber on the ottoman which had befriended her, when released from the rude grasp of Warner. She appeared to Albert's mind, uninformed of the last half-hour's events, to sleep; but still he could trace that in her countenance which bore similitude to the expression which so often of late had startled him, and which had made him anxious, yet fearful, to ascertain the spring whence emanated such bitter waters.

As he looked upon her couchant form, this thought gained full impulse in his mind; and again the moving cry of "Transfusion!" reverberated within the living cells of his brain. At one universal swoop he called to mind her thousand fitful contrarieties—his own dread of De Mara sharing in the precious mystery—the strange account that Manvers had lately furnished—and the general maze of confusion that seemed to pervade all their acts and all their intentions. To all these—each of which was a dagger to his soul—there was but one solution:—that solution he had within his beck and ken; and passive—motionless before him lay the medium of his enterprise.

This, then, was at length the moment for the accomplishment of the Soul's Transfusion. Now must he strain his whole nerve and fibre to the accomplishment of the labour, and give real evidence that he indeed possessed the power, with the theory of which he had so long been pampering his brain.

But though all this and more he urged upon himself, as he stood over the recumbent form of the exhausted maiden, there was that within him which sickened to the death, as he endeavoured to string his resolution to the proper pitch. What was it that he was about to attempt?—Whither would it lead him?—And what assurance had he that he could steady the whole of this trying course with so curbing a hand, as to be master throughout of each movement that the change required?—Now that the trial scene was in sooth before him, a thousand first-born perils rushed in quick succession through his soul, and he trembled at the stupendous magnitude of the machine he was called upon to govern. A night of scaring and mysterious sensatious enveloped him; and he was like the traveller, when he wanders, solitary and timorous, through the midnight gloom over some vast infrequent moor, prone each instant to give an unnatural and overwhelming dimension to objects, that in a more defining light would pass unheeded and unfeared.

him of his joy-bestowing thoughts, his glorious meditations, his air-built reveries, his pure elastic spirit, and leave him nought in return but eternal sorrow and vain regret.

Madeline's soul had left this earthly world!—Madeline was dead! The informing spirit of her brother, healthy and entire, had entered her frame, and its failing mechanism had recovered a transitory strength; but its fevered blood, and disturbed brain, influenced in their turn the stranger soul: the dissolution already at work in his new-found abode was delayed; but it paused only in its operations. He felt that the muscles, fibres, and nerves, which he animated, would soon cease to obey him; he sought within the recesses of his mind for the only remedy, the power—the spell that would restore him to his deserted body. But it came not—and, in its stead, weakness and fear; and convulsive gaspings shook yet more the errant spirit. "O for a remedy! for human help, and a kind hand and voice to encourage and calm!" Still as he reflected, terror grew—again, shaking and trembling in every joint, the form of Madeline arose and wrung its hands—"Help!" cried an unaccustomed voice—"O, help! Seaton! Uncle! Help!" The idea gave momentary relief. He would seek Manvers and tell him all; and the unshaken intellects of his relative might find some means of restoring the physical machinery that now refused to obey his will: his despairing soul felt that if some cordial medicine would renovate but for a minute the falling fabric he longed to quit, he might regain thought, memory—the spell, and succeed in transferring his exiled spirit to its rightful mansion.

But let me hurry to the concluding scene of this fatal tragedy.

The half hour that De Mara had allowed Warner for the prosecution of his machinations against the wretched Madeline was watched by the nobleman with the most feverish anxiety: each moment appeared to him an age; and whatever sound stirred, whatever accent reached his ear, roused him to the most painful attention. At length, when endurance seemed to be at its worst, an approaching step was heard, and De Mara sprang to the door to greet the coming (as he fondly hoped) of Madeline and his agent: but he looked for either in vain. He who entered was Manvers. All pale with anxiety, and breathless with ill-conditioned haste, the good old man had endeavoured to trace the flight of the guilty Warner. But not once had he caught a glimpse of the fugitive. Either the strong and hardy frame of the ruffian had enabled him far to outstrip the irresolute pace of his enfeebled follower, or else his wily cunning (taught by long experience that a circuitous course was the most effectual way to defy pursuit) had taken some more intricate and tortuous road to the village, than that adopted by the Senior. Be the cause, however, what it might, Manvers soon lost all hope of overtaking him. Still, by diligence and determination, there was room to expect that the guilty pair, on whose heads the blood of Wahrend called aloud for vengeance, might be secured before they could effect their escape from Unwalden. With this object in view, Manvers hurried to the inn, where awhile before he had seen the carriage stop, and, after a hasty word to the host in explanation of his errand, he ascended to De Mara's apartment.

The count, who had entirely concluded that the step he heard upon the stairs was that of Urfort, was taken by surprise at the entry of one who was a perfect stranger to him: but before he had time to inquire the meaning of the intrusion, Manvers exclaimed, "Count De Mara, you are my prisoner!"

"Never, while life remains," cried the startled nobleman; and he snatched from the table, near which he stood, the pistols with which it had been Altoz's care to provide him.

"Count," returned Manvers, "it is in vain you struggle. Me you may

send to join the murdered Wahrend; but the whole village is alarmed, and you are beset on every side. The time is come when you must answer justice."

"That is yet to be seen, old man," exclaimed De Mara, his fury fast increasing:—"one step nearer, and I fire. Meanwhile safety may chance to lie behind me." And as he spoke he threw open the bed-room door, with the intention of making his escape by the back window, before those, whom he imagined to be posted in front, could make good their capture.

To the astonishment of Manvers, this action of the count exposed to his view the monster Warner, whom he had in vain pursued. But whatever might be the old man's feelings, they were more than equalled by De Mara's surprise, for as he prepared to rush forward to the window of the chamber, he found it already occupied with the sturdy form of Warner, who, with the red box (the contents of which had so excited his admiration) fast grasped under his arm, was in the very act of making his escape by that outlet, through which he had a minute before stealthily obtained ingress in pursuit of his booty.

The whole of this was perceived and interpreted by the count in a tenth part of the time that it has occupied in telling; and as the conviction flashed upon his mind, he levelled the pistol which his right hand grasped, and fired.

A deep-rendered groan from Warner told the result: for a moment he tried to clutch the window-frame, but, missing in his attempt, he fell heavily backward on the chamber floor, while his right arm still convulsively kept possession of the booty, for the sake of which he had made such a desperate venture.

At that very instant a posse of the villagers, headed by the host, rushed into the chamber from without, and before the count could recover his self-possession, he found himself disarmed and in custody.

This effected, one of the party advanced for the purpose of lifting Warner from the ground, and to afford such relief as the case might allow. The agonies of death were upon him; but his whole frame seemed to shudder, as he perceived the meaning of the attempt; and, after a moment's struggle with the pangs that scathed him, he exclaimed, in a shriek—"Away! and touch me not, unless you are so in love with the blood of a dare-all, that you needs must dye your hands in the drenching. Away! I say—and stand not between me and my noble patron."

"Execrable monster!" muttered De Mara.

He, who was thus apostrophised, seemed to be fast sinking into annihilation; yet, once again, though with a fearful struggle, he summoned his expiring spirit to a rally.

"I say I will see the count. Good gentlemen let him stand near, for sight gives way, and I have him not in view."

De Mara shook his head, as if in token of disgust, but the dying man still continued—"What! will he not come? I have a precious word for his comfort. Bid him come, or he loses it for ever."

The nobleman, in whom hope was not utterly extinct, was excited by these words, and he approached the spot where Warner lay writhing in his gore.

"Ah!" cried the latter, "I see you now. Give me your hand."

De Mara with an effort complied.

The villain seized it; and for a minute so fastening was his gripe, that it appeared as if he had started forth afresh to his pristine vigour.

He seized it; and, deep and loud, burst from him a fit of frightful laughter, such as made good men tremble with the thought that something worse than human dwelt within that bosom.

"Ah, ha, ha!" he exclaimed; "do we indeed shake hands at last? Why, this is a friendly parting. Gentlemen, I owe my patron a good turn

for the bullet that racks me to the core; and I will pay him. I introduce you to the murderer of Wahrend—to the would-be seducer of Madeline—of my daughter."

"Your daughter!" cried De Mara; but what further he would have said was checked by Warner suddenly quitting hold of his hand, and once again sinking to the ground. For a short minute it was as though he were dead:—yet not so. The last struggle came, and fearful was the exhibition. Groan succeeded groan, each more death-inscribed than the last;—the huge and iron sinews of his body palpitated, as it were, with sickening velocity; and his nervous frame rolled upon the floor in miserable torture.

"Devils! Devils!" he shouted, goaded by agony to madness—"why help you not?—One stab—oh, for mercy, one heart-stab to end this thrall! No! all around me are demons, and there is no Christian mercy left. Ah! now I see why none have mercy. Look! look!—their forms change. Yonder stands Agnes ready with a thousand whips to lacerate this flesh—too suffering already; and there by her side stand both her parents, while Manvers beckons them this way:—they look—O God! how pale and wo-enthralled they look!—And there—no, I will not see her!—Take Deboos away, lest she conjure to my sight her uncle's corpse, as it lay bleeding in the hall of his *casino*. Why do you let her grasp my throat, and choke my very breathing?—I thought strangling was more easy. What! Madeline and Albert too! Do they come to curse their father? Do they curse me?—I curse them! Yes—with this last throe—all—each—world—mankind—I CURSE!"

So died the fiend.

Those that looked on felt as if they were indeed cursed in having to witness such a death. The honesty of their natures shuddered at words of such inhuman import; and the bystanders crowded far away into a distant corner, as if with one common impulse of avoiding nearer contact with so foul a being. But, whatever the disgust they felt, they could not help listening with harrowing interest to his dying exclamations; and so entirely were they absorbed by them that no one heard the stoppage of a carriage at the door of the *auberge*, or was conscious of the entrance of one who listened with deepest pain to Warner's condemnation of the count, and with engrossing horror to his still more sweeping condemnation of himself.

He who had thus arrived was Altoz. The earliest impulse of the count, who was the first to perceive him after death had closed the imprecations of Urfort, was to advance towards his former friend, as if for a moment he had forgotten the inquisitorial errand that had brought him to Unwalden. But if it were so, one glance at the expression of the chevalier's countenance was sufficient to bring back to his recollection the manner in which they had parted; and the one instant of pleasure he had derived from perceiving the entrance of Altoz was speedily overwhelmed in the consideration that he, too, was there to help to crush him beyond the reach of hope.

The chevalier's surprise at the scene that offered itself to his gaze need not be pourtrayed. The words that he had heard fall from Warner, ere he lay a corpse on the blood-stained floor, and the conscious shrinking of De Mara from all men's eyes, easily led him to the conclusion, that the cause of Wahrend's death being discovered, was the meaning of the crowd that filled the chamber, and that the time was near at hand when the Frenchman would have to render an account at a much more powerful tribunal than that of which he was the accredited representative.

While he conned these circumstances in his mind, he stood for a moment irresolute; but, that elapsed, he drew nearer to the nobleman and spoke. "Count de Mara," cried he, "you know the business that has brought me to Unwalden. I will not mention it publicly, as it might tend to your detriment. It is sufficient for me to demand whether you are prepared to

afford that explanation which I was commissioned by my friends to require from you this morning?"

"Oh, Altoz! Altoz!" exclaimed the prisoner in low tone, "let this be at another time, I entreat. For one short hour forget that I am under ban, and assist me through the fearful difficulty in which you find me placed. Good gentlemen," added he, raising his voice, "this is the chevalier Altoz—a Spaniard of high rank—a most responsible nobleman! I beseech you to take his guarantee for my forthcoming at the necessary time."

"Count," cried Altoz, in a whisper, "for your own sake I entreat you to be silent. I have already done more in your behalf than I can justify to myself, or those who sent me."

"Oh! Altoz," returned the Frenchman, "let me entreat you! Remember our thousand pledges of friendship! Remember our plighted bonds of union! And will you *now* desert me? Will you suffer De Mara—your friend, De Mara, to be dragged to a common dungeon—perchance to a common scaffold? Great God! can you hear these words, and still refuse me?"

The chevalier was prevented the pain of further refusal by the magistrate of the village (who by this time had joined the party assembled in the chamber) approaching the spot where they were standing apart in converse.

"Sir," said he to the chevalier, "you will doubtless excuse my interference, when you understand that my duty requires it. The Count de Mara is a prisoner under the most serious charge; and I may not—I must not permit any one whatever to hold communication with him previous to his examination."

Altoz bowed, and seemed as if he were about to withdraw, but he was interrupted by the count, whose every action appeared instinct with the most feverish—nay, cowardly—anxiety.

"For the sake of Heaven, and of mercy, leave me not, good Altoz!" he exclaimed;—"I look around, and all men's eyes save yours are fierce and angry. And you, sir," continued he, turning to the magistrate, "can it be indeed your duty to refuse this gentleman's guarantee? In all honour, in all honesty—he will be answerable for my appearance at the needful time:—I myself will swear to be forthcoming."

The chevalier felt that it was time to speak out, for, by the busy whispers that ran round the apartment, he could perceive that the propriety of his own detention was in agitation. "Count de Mara," said he, solemnly, "I know not what authority this gentleman may have to receive sureties for your manumission; but thus much out of respect for myself I am bound to say—that one of those sureties I can never consent to become. My task here will be performed when I shall have informed you, that the explanation which has been demanded of you not having been given, I am authorised in the name of the Knot to pronounce your perpetual and irrevocable expulsion from their body."

"Is it so?" cried the count, rendered desperate by the manner in which he found himself becoming more and more involved in the overbearing consequences of his design upon the unfortunate Madeline. "Is it so, indeed? And has it been for such friends as these, De Mara, that you have dared the world's censure, and good men's curse?—No, not their curse, for it is only bad men who curse. Has it been for such hollow companions that you have sacrificed the pursuit of all that is good and all that is admirable?"

"Sir," interrupted the magistrate, "my office requires that I should immediately see you placed in custody."

"Custody!" iterated De Mara:—"Ah, now it is coming! Now judgment and revenge are fastening on me, and my yet unsullied name will in a little while be enrolled in a jail-list to challenge the finger of scorn, and the hatred of honesty. But I will not go!—I will not be dragged to contamination!"

"Stand forward, men!" exclaimed the magistrate authoritatively, on hearing the count's last words:—"one of you open the door that leads to the stairs, and let the rest seize the prisoner."

"Off, off, you ministers of pollution!" shouted De Mara:—"oh, gracious Heaven! is there not one in all the world yet left to side with me? Alas! for Madeline—where is she? Does *she*, too, leave me to my disgrace?"

Even as he spoke, light fleet steps were heard on the stairs, and the rustle of a woman's dress. De Mara started, and every eye turned towards the door, as the form of Madeline entered, tottering and feeble—her face pale and wan—her eyes alone speaking life and energy. Manvers uttered an exclamation of pity and terror; but at so dread a moment, despite her altered looks, joy danced upon De Mara's heart. He was reviled, deserted by all—by all save the dear fond being he had so cruelly betrayed: but she was true—was his. He knew what woman's clinging fondness is! He knew the sex's fidelity—its firm adherence to the loved object in danger and misery--here there was a friend. Her entreaties might bring Seaton to his side, or her woman's wit find means of freedom for him. Oh! well he knew that the passionately-loving girl would incur any risk—endure every hardship for the sake of liberating the object of her tenderest affections from death. Besides, De Mara loved—selfish and profligate as he was, he adored the beauty--he worshipped the true and loving creature whom he now believed to stand before him. Gladness lighted up his eyes, and his plan was already formed. Every promise, every sacrifice should be made, but he would win this angel-guest to hover near his steps--to wait on him—to plan, to execute his liberation.

The form of Madeline stood motionless—her eyes turned from one object to another—she saw Seaton, and stretched out her hand with a smile, while De Mara approaching, in the soft sweet voice that had before had despot-influence of the maiden, he whispered—"This is kind, my Madeline! you are here, and all is well. I fear no danger—I know no harm while you are present. Dearest Madeline, forsake me not!"

"I will not"—such words issued from the orphan's lips, while a bitter smile curled them—"I will not forsake you, De Mara! Man of many crimes, I will be near you to the last, and my voice shall pronounce your doom!"

There was something jarring in the tone, something in her kindling, angry gaze that startled De Mara. Yet he was prepared for her indignation and reproaches; and his wish was to soothe—to show how all was changed--to bring back soft-yielding love to her subdued heart. "Ah, dearest!" he exclaimed, "the doom you pronounce is all that can weigh on De Mara's soul! The false accusations, the bolts and bars of these mistaken men, even if they could wreak all their power, are nothing to me. Do you speak to me, Madeline—and be true to me!"

He watched the changes of her countenance, and as she looked inquiringly around, he replied to the questioning expression of her face, "You may indeed wonder, sweetest, to find me thus surrounded—a prisoner! But do not fear: these men are powerless; they accuse me of I know not what—of a duel—of Wahrend's unhappy death;—but even in this low-thoughted republic of Geneva, the code of honour must find partizans."

"Honour!" articulated the being whom he addressed; "Oh, praise the honour of De Mara! So, it is discovered—it is known; and my murdered friend will be avenged!"

Every one looked now astonished and inquisitive, while De Mara, in a voice of reproach, exclaimed—"Madeline! my Madeline!"

"Speak not that honoured name!" replied the other, in solemn accents; 'dare not turn your thoughts on the much-injured one! I will not here speak of Madeline's wrongs—of your treachery—your coward falsehoods.

The tears—the heart-pangs of the miserable orphan, are heavily counted against you: but I speak not of those; I must, while these feeble, failing organs permit, perform another, an imperious duty. Gentlemen——"

All turned to listen;—her ghastly pale countenance—her shivering, trembling limbs, excited pity, but there was an expression of solemn majesty in her eye, and if her voice seemed weak, yet the articulation was clear though slow, and all listened awe-struck and eager.

"Gentlemen, hear me! My fate, I know not what it is or will be—it hangs by a thread—I almost feel as if I were about to die, but I will perform one duty, and leave to pitying Heaven the consummation of my hapless destiny. Gentlemen, Count de Mara is a murderer! I speak of the thing I saw—of the words I heard; I received the last words of the assassinated Wahrend. The count's servant was present at the duel—the true-hearted Swiss trusted to a nobleman's faith, and was content with this one witness—a fellow perjured—suborned—the vile instrument of his vile master's will. Wahrend was murdered! He died by no fair wound! In cold blood those two friends plunged the sword into his heart! Believe me, for I saw—I know—let not the murderer escape—let retribution be his! Seaton, my uncle!—listen—mark my words! draw near—oh, help!"

A thousand times, as the being before him spoke, De Mara would have interrupted. The solemn voice overbore his passionate exclamations; but this voice grew more feeble—the form of Madeline sank upon the floor. Manvers rushed to her side, and with fond and tender exclamations tried to call back her fainting spirits. A smile illuminated the countenance on which he gazed!—the hand of the dying one softly pressed his. "Too late!" murmured the broken, but still sweet voice—"your help is too late! And so best! I would not survive events so horrible! My uncle, I am satisfied to die."

"Say not those words!" cried De Mara, forgetting her cruel denunciations—her, what appeared to him, insane or false assertions—his crimes and dangers:—forgetting all, De Mara rushed forward and knelt beside the form that lay gasping, fainting on the floor. "Die not, my Madeline! O live! Even while I die, thy victim, lovely and injured Madeline, live!"

The eyes of the lost one unclosed: they were fixed on De Mara. He could not mistake the glance of hatred, of deep and eternal abhorrence, that they darted on him. "I die thy victim; count, my death will also be numbered in the list of thy crimes!"

"O Madeline, cruel girl, overwhelm me not," cried De Mara, frantic at the very thought that he had lost her love, even in death; "recall those words! O Madeline, live, or, dying, pity—pity the miserable wretch before you! Despite all, be mine—be true! I shall expiate all soon—the scaffold—the block! O Madeline! to these you bring me! Yet I forgive—and do you forgive;—bless me, even now!"

He strove to take her wan lifeless hand—ah! how tenderly even in death and horror had the fond, faithful Madeline replied to his adjurations, whose earnestness and truth even excited pity in Manvers! But the masked Albert had feelings too high wrought;—the death of Wahrend—of his beloved sister, still excited his keenest sorrow; his own wretched destiny stung him with despair. De Mara's touch excited uncontrollable abhorrence—the living spirit re-animated with one other effort the dissolving frame, and, as with lightning flash, one moment of power was granted—the hand was snatched away;—the eyes, the lips, the whole countenance expressed unutterable detestation—the voice pronounced "My curse is on thee!" and the form sunk on the floor heavy and dull—the soul was gone—Albert's soul had fled the ungenial dungeon it had so madly sought—and the form of Madeline lay dead.

The task is finished—the labour at an end! We cannot dilate on the

revulsion of horror that agonized De Mara, when he saw his hapless victim expiring at his feet. He believed that madness had lately animated her—thus only could he account for her words; but he had brought her to this—and she was dead! The death of Wahrend sat heavy on his soul; but with burden a thousandfold did the fate of the beloved Madeline oppress him. He felt that however innocent in absolute act, he was a twice-told assassin—he was satisfied to pay the penalty of his crimes; and here we let fall the veil over his fate. For little pleasure it would be to follow the guilty nobleman from Unwalden to his dungeon—from his dungeon to his trial—from his trial to the scaffold, where all was expiated; even though remorse most bitter, and heart-felt repentance did some small grace to his dying hours.

Little reward would it be to the historian of this sad tale, to tell how the miserable Manvers was led from life towards death, till those who looked on him thought that they beheld the thin unembodied genie of wo and wretchedness, rather than the mortal victim of their peace-denying energy.

He had clasped the dead form of his erring lost niece to his heart; he had endeavoured to restore vitality; and when he found all his efforts vain, and was forced to entertain the conviction that she was indeed no more, his thoughts reverted to Albert. Where was he? Why had he deserted his sister? What would be his anguish on finding that he had lost her for ever? Manvers left the corpse of poor Madeline to the care of the women of the village, who gathered weeping round; and with broken uncertain gait directed his steps to the Single Cottage. He looked intently, as he proceeded, to discover whether Albert was approaching; desirous, however sad the task, to be the first to inform him of his miserable loss. He reached the threshold of the cottage—all was silent within; and the darkness that reigned in the room spoke only of emptiness. Manvers was about to turn away when an object caught his eye: he rushed to the window—tore back the shading curtains—dashed open the shutters, and then with a shriek recognised the lifeless body of Albert lying at his feet.

* * * * *

The orphans were buried beside their mother in the village churchyard. An impenetrable mystery concealed the cause of the double death. But they were gone; and that sufficed for Manvers. His days and nights were spent beside their graves. The children of the village beheld him with reverential terror:—the women strove to console him, and to withdraw him from the abodes of death. He answered their solicitations by tears only: and still the shades of evening, the dark night-dews, the sun, the tempest, and the frost, find him beside the graves of those he loved and lost.

THE END.

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